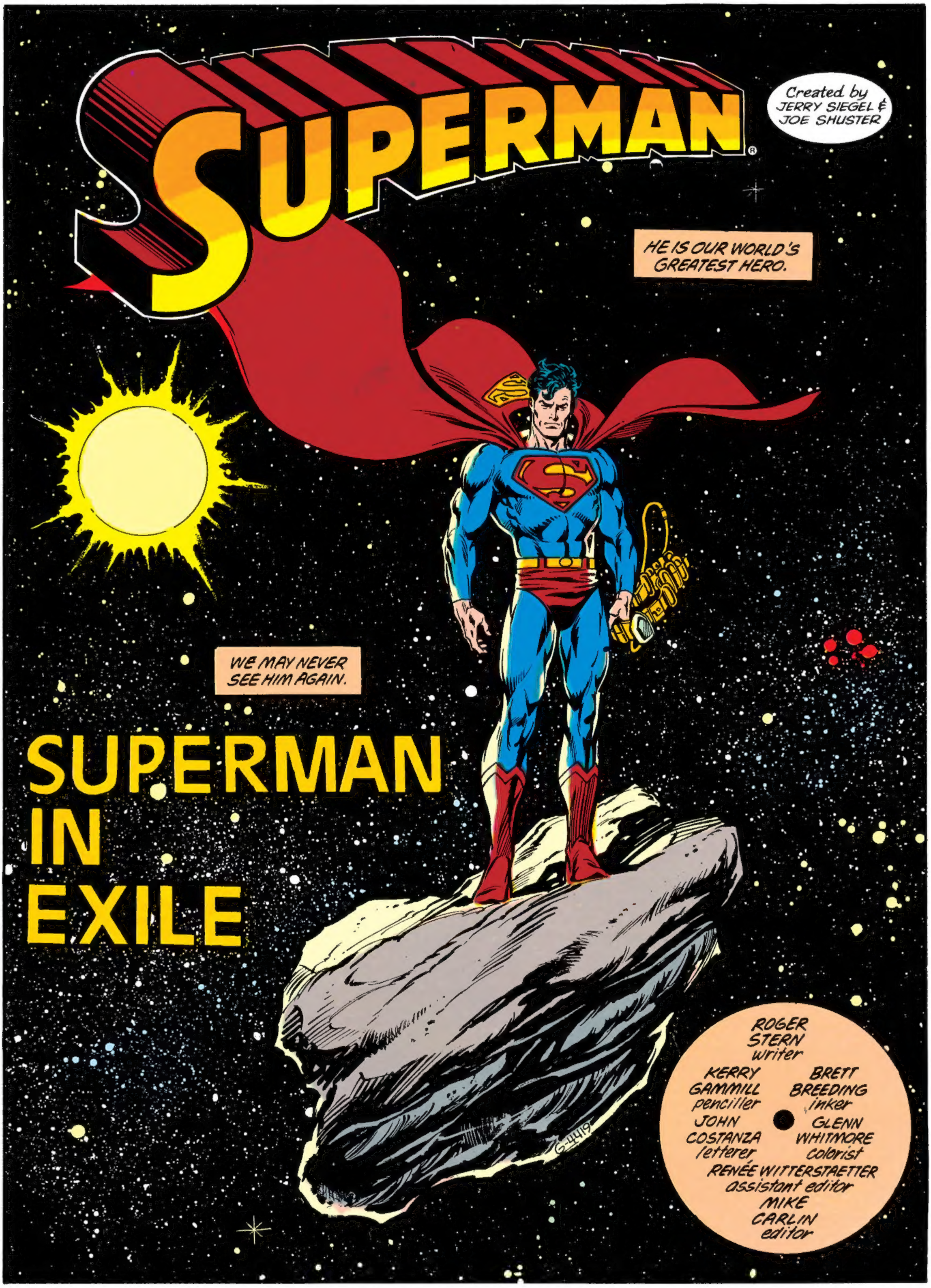
SUPERMAN

Post-CRISIS ON INFINITE EARTHS

Volume 28:

Exile in Space



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FOR NEARLY AN HOUR HE HAS DRIFTED IN THE AWFUL STILLNESS OF SPACE, STARING BACK AT OUR LITTLE WORLD...

...HIS WORLD.

SO MANY MEMORIES...

HE HAD SPRUNG FROM A LIFE MATRIX THAT WAS ROCKETED AWAY FROM A DOOMED PLANET CALLED KRYPTON, DECADES BEFORE HIS BIRTH. HE HAD BEEN SO LUCKY...

BORNE INTO THE HANDS OF MARTHA AND JONATHAN KENT, WHO NAMED HIM CLARK, HE WAS RAISED IN A LOVING HOME.

AS HIS KRYPTONIAN HERITAGE BEGAN TO MANIFEST ITSELF, THE KENTS COUNSELED HIM ON HOW BEST TO USE HIS ASTOUNDING POWERS.

WITH THEIR GUIDANCE, CLARK KENT ASSUMED THE IDENTITY OF SUPERMAN... TO FIGHT A NEVER-ENDING BATTLE FOR TRUTH, JUSTICE, AND THE AMERICAN WAY...

...ALL THE WHILE LIVING AND WORKING AMONGST HUMANITY AS A RESPECTED JOURNALIST.

HOW COULD SUCH A GOOD LIFE HAVE GONE SO WRONG?

HE HAD BEEN SO SURE OF HIMSELF BEFORE HE HAD GONE TO THE POCKET UNIVERSE -- A SKEWED VERSION OF OUR OWN REALITY --

--WHERE A WHOLE WORLD HAD BEEN RENDERED LIFELESS BY THREE BEINGS WHOSE POWER RIVALED HIS OWN! AND THOUGH HE HAD STOPPED THEM...

YOU MAY HAVE ROBBED US OF OUR POWERS, SUPERMAN, BUT THAT WILL AVAIL YOU NOTHING! WE WILL FIND A WAY TO GET THEM BACK!

WE WILL FIND A WAY TO GET TO YOUR REALITY. AND WE WILL DESTROY YOUR WORLD!

THEY HAD MEANT EVERY WORD.

THEY HAD ALREADY KILLED FIVE BILLION HUMAN BEINGS.

AS THE ONLY FORCE FOR JUSTICE LEFT IN THAT HELLISH PLACE, HE FELT COMPELLED TO PUNISH THEM, AS THEY HAD PUNISHED A WORLD.

IT WAS THE HARDEST TASK HE HAD EVER FACED.

UNDER ATTACK BY THE MENTALIST BRAINIAC, HIS GRIEF AND SORROW ERUPTED IN ANGER AND RAGE!

HE RETURNED HOME, TRIED TO PUT ALL BEHIND HIM... BUT HE COULD NOT.

AND AN ENCOUNTER WITH SUPERNATURAL FORCES REMINDED HIM OF HIS OWN MORTALITY... AND HIS FALLIBILITY.

HIS SLEEP WAS PLAGUED BY NIGHTMARES, WHEREIN HE WAS BEDEVILED BY THE GHOSTS OF HIS SLAIN FOES.

AT THE SAME TIME, ORDER IN METROPOLIS WAS CHALLENGED BY A NEW GANGBUSTER WHO TERRORIZED THE CITY'S CRIMINALS.

FOR WEEKS, THE MAN OF STEEL SEARCHED FOR GANGBUSTER WITHOUT SUCCESS. AN ALTERCATION BETWEEN THAT GRIM VIGILANTE AND THE GOLDEN GUARDIAN FINALLY REVEALED WHY...

BRAINIAC 'S ASSAULT HAD AFFECTED HIM MORE DEEPLY THAN HE'D REALIZED... RIPPING INTO HIS ALREADY TROUBLED SUBCONSCIOUS...

... FREEING THE IMPULSIVE SIDE OF HIS PERSONALITY TO CREATE THE GANGBUSTER WHENEVER HE DRIFTED OFF TO SLEEP.

THE SHOCK OF REVELATION HAD BROUGHT HIM TO HIS SENSES, BUT WITH AWARENESS CAME FEAR...

COULD HE MAINTAIN CONTROL, OR WOULD HE AGAIN FALL PREY TO HIS OWN DARKER URGES?

CAN'T TAKE THAT CHANCE.

A SCHIZOID SUPERMAN IS *TOO DANGEROUS* TO BE AROUND PEOPLE.

HAVE TO *LOSE* MYSELF... OUT THERE.

A BREATHING APPARATUS SUPPLIED BY HIS FRIEND PROFESSOR HAMILTON WOULD ALLOW HIM TO SURVIVE IN THE AIRLESS VACUUM--

--AND AN EXPERIMENTAL *TELEPORTATION HARNESS* ACQUIRED FROM THE ALIEN OMEGA MEN WOULD ENABLE HIM TO CROSS THE LIMITLESS VOID.

LEAVING HAD NOT BEEN EASY. THERE HAD BEEN PREPARATIONS TO COVER CLARK KENT'S REMAINING RESPONSIBILITIES... GOOD-BYES TO BE SAID TO MA AND PA... AND LANA.

EVEN NOW, PART OF HIM WANTS TO GO BACK... TO SEE LOIS ONE LAST TIME. TO TELL HER...

BUT NO.

TOO LATE FOR THAT NOW.

MUCH TOO LATE.

METROPOLIS.

AS CREWS LABOR AROUND THE CLOCK TO REPAIR THE BOMB-DAMAGED UPPER STORIES OF THE DAILY PLANET BUILDING --

--ON THE LOWER FLOORS, IT'S BUSINESS AS USUAL FOR THE EDITOR OF THIS GREAT METROPOLITAN NEWSPAPER...

'EY, MISTUH WHITE... EXPRESS MAIL PACKAGE JUST CAME FOR YOUSE... ALLA WAY FROM KANSAS!

KANSAS?!

THANK YOU, JOHN.

PERRY WHITE EDITOR

NATIONAL EXPRESS

HMMPH... IT'S FROM KENT... "PERRY: HERE'S THE FIRST INSTALLMENT OF MY SERIES ON INTERGANG... AS PER OUR PHONE CONVERSATION, I'LL BE OUT OF TOUCH FOR SOME TIME... MORE TO FOLLOW..."

WELL, KENT, I HOPE THIS *EXPOSÉ* IS WORTH... EH?

"... CRIMINAL CONGLOMERATE... EXTORTION... ASSASSINATION"?!?

GREAT CAESAR'S GHOST!

'GET ME THE *PRESS ROOM!*

HELLO, BRADY? HOW FAST CAN YOU SET UP FOR A *SPECIAL EDITION*? YOU'LL GET YOUR AUTHORIZATION, JUST *DO IT!* AND HOLD FOR PAGES ONE AND THREE!

TAMMY, GET THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT ON THE HORN.

I TRUST KENT'S FACTS, BUT I HAVE TO MAKE SURE OUR TAILS ARE COVERED! THIS STORY COULD BLOW THE CITY *WIDE OPEN!*

I CAN SEE WHY KENT DECIDED TO GO INTO *HIDING*... THIS IS *STRONG STUFF!*

"I HOPE HE ISN'T GETTING IN OVER HIS HEAD!"

I'VE BEEN... THROWN THROUGH *HYPERSPACE*... A FEW TIMES BEFORE. BUT... MAKING THE JUMP... IS STILL PRETTY *RUGGED.*

FEELS LIKE HAVING ALL YOUR HAIR PLUCKED OUT FROM THE *INSIDE!*

HOPE IT GETS EASIER WITH PRACTICE. I MAY HAVE TO... *EH? NOW* WHAT?

=UHN=...TOO CLOSE TO THIS *PLANET*...

...GRAVITY'S GOT ME!

THE MAN OF STEEL PLUNGES OVER FIFTEEN MILES STRAIGHT DOWN THROUGH THIS WORLD'S ATMOSPHERE BEFORE...

GOT TO GET IT TOGETHER... WOULDN'T DO TO GO BUSTING UP THE LANDSCAPE THOUSANDS OF *LIGHT YEARS* FROM EARTH...

...IF THAT'S WHERE I *AM!* THE *TELEPORTER CONTROLS* AREN'T CALIBRATED TO ANY EXACTNESS. THERE'S NO WAY OF KNOWING *WHERE* I'VE WOUND UP--

--UNTIL I TAKE A GOOD LOOK AROUND.

OH MY GOD.

IT...IT'S THE *DEAD WORLD!*

I'M BACK IN THE *POCKET UNIVERSE!*

NO... NO, I CAN'T BE!

THAT WORLD HAD A *YELLOW* SUN LIKE EARTH'S ...AND ITS ATMOSPHERE HAD BEEN TORN AWAY.

THIS PLANET HAS *AIR*, THOUGH THERE LOOKS TO BE VERY LITTLE OXYGEN TO IT.

NO WATER, EITHER... JUST AN OCCASIONAL POOL OF *MERCURY*. NOT A SINGLE SIGN OF LIFE AS FAR AS I CAN SEE... NO SIGN THAT THERE WAS *EVER* ANY LIFE HERE!

PROBABLY A LOT OF WORLDS LIKE THIS IN THE UNIVERSE.

HOPE I CAN FIND ONE THAT'S *MORE HOSPITABLE*.

BACK ON EARTH, IN THE CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS OF GALAXY COMMUNICATIONS...

?!:!! I DON'T BELIEVE IT!

NEARLY TWO WHOLE PAGES ON *INTERGANG* -- LISTING OUR MOST RECENT MAJOR OPERATIONS! HOW DID KENT GET HIS HANDS ON THAT INFORMATION? *HOW?!*

DAILY ☆ PLANET

INTERGANG: A VIPER IN OUR MIDST

BY CLARK KENT

CLEAN-UP CONTINUES

I CAN'T TAKE ANY CHANCES WITH HIM. HE'S ALREADY GOTTEN MUCH TOO CLOSE.

GILLESPIE--!

YES, MR. EDGE?

I WANT CLARK KENT *HIT!*

KENT--? THE *REPORTER?!* IS THAT A GOOD IDEA?

DON'T QUESTION ME! I WANT HIM ELIMINATED BEFORE HE CAN LINK INTER-GANG TO GALAXY! MY CONNECTION MUST *NOT* BE REVEALED!

BUT HOW--?

THAT'S *YOUR* PROBLEM! USE THE *WALL CRAWLERS* IF YOU HAVE TO--

--BUT GET THE JOB *DONE!* I WANT THIS TAKEN CARE OF BEFORE MORNING! IS THAT *CLEAR?*

YESSIR!

DID YOU SAY SOMETHING, *MORGAN?*

NOTHING TO WORRY YOUR PRETTY HEAD ABOUT, *CAT...*

...JUST SOME BUSINESS.

WHILE, ACROSS TOWN, DEEP WITHIN A HIGHLY SECURED SECTION OF THE LEXCORP TOWER...

SO, DOCTOR--

--WHAT'S THE PROGNOSIS FOR *BRAINIAC?*

WELL, IT'S BEEN TOUCH AND GO, LEX. HE WAS JUST SHAKING OFF THE EFFECTS OF HIS ENCOUNTER WITH *GANGBUSTER** WHEN THE ALIENS SET OFF THEIR *PARAGENE BOMB.*** THAT KNOCKED HIM BACK INTO A COMA.

STILL, HE'S PRETTY *RESILIENT*... HE'LL PULL THROUGH.

* LAST ISSUE.
** ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN #450 & INVASION #3.

YES, YES...BUT HOW *THOROUGH* WILL HIS RECOVERY BE? AND CAN YOU MAKE HIM MORE... *TRACTABLE?*

HE REALLY *BOTHERS* YOU, DOESN'T HE?

YES.

BRAINIAC POSSESSES KNOWLEDGE THAT IS EVERY BIT AS VALUABLE AS HIS *MENTAL POWERS*...BUT HE IS *WORTHLESS* TO ME IF HE CANNOT BE CONTROLLED!

RELAX, LEX...I'VE ALREADY GIVEN HIM ENOUGH *HAPPY JUICE* TO KEEP HIM MANAGEABLE!

ARE YOU ABSOLUTELY *CERTAIN* OF THAT, *KELLEY?* I MUST HAVE--!

L-L-LUTHOR--?

YES, BRAINIAC, I'M RIGHT HERE. NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT...

...WE'LL TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOU!

LUTHOR... H-HE'S NOT HERE!

WHO'S NOT HERE?

S-SUPERMAN..

"...I CAN'T FEEL HIS MIND ANYMORE.

"HE'S GONE!"

YE GODS!

DOES THE *TELEPORTER* HOME IN ON GRAVITY SOURCES?

HOWEVER IT FUNCTIONS, IT'S NOT WORKING NOW! THIS STAR'S *GRAVITY WELL* MUST BE TOO MUCH FOR IT...

... AND MAYBE TOO MUCH FOR *ME!* I ONCE SURVIVED A SMALL NUCLEAR EXPLOSION, BUT FALLING INTO A *STAR* IS ANOTHER MATTER!

GOT...TO... *STOP!*

=*UUNGH!*= I'VE SLOWED MY FALL, BUT... CAN'T PULL AWAY.

GOT TO TRY SOMETHING ELSE... IF I CAN'T BREAK FREE, I'M TOAST!

NEVER BEEN THIS CLOSE TO A STAR. DESPITE THE INCREDIBLE HEAT, I ACTUALLY FEEL STRONGER!

THE RADIANT ENERGY FROM THIS *YELLOW SUN* IS BOOSTING MY CELLS' POWER LEVEL!

BUT THAT WON'T DO ME ANY GOOD IF MY *BREATHING APPARATUS* MELTS DOWN! MY BODY'S *PROTECTIVE AURA* WON'T WITHSTAND A STAR'S ENVIRONMENT FOR LONG, EITHER.

I HAVE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS POWER BOOST WHILE I CAN -- HAVE TO FLY FASTER! *FASTER!!* --

-- BUILD UP ENOUGH *ACCELERATION* TO ESCAPE THE STAR'S GRAVITY.

Y-YES!

N-N-NOW... IF ONLY... I CAN *STOP!*

N-NEVER GONE THIS FAST BEFORE. FEEL AS THOUGH... I WEIGH... *TONS!*

MAYBE TELEPORTER... WILL ABSORB... M-MOMENTUM? GOT TO TRY...

"...COULDN'T FEEL ANY WORSE!"

BACK IN METROPOLIS...

LOOK, AMANDA... EXCUSE ME... MIZ McCOY, I'VE SPENT WEEKS ON THIS CASE--

416

MATTHEW STOCKTON

PRIVATE DETECTIVE

--AND ALL I'VE FOUND OUT IS THAT CLARK KENT IS DAMNED HARD TO TAIL! MAYBE IF YOU'D TELL ME WHY YOU WANT HIM WATCHED--!

I'D RATHER NOT PREJUDICE YOU. IF YOU UNCOVER THE PROOF I'M LOOKING FOR, YOU'LL KNOW IT.

I SWEAR, THE SMART ONES ARE AS DIZZY AS THE AIRHEADS! IF I WASN'T SO HARD UP FOR WORK--!

WELL, IN THAT CASE, WHY DON'T I JUST BREAK INTO KENT'S APARTMENT AND SEE WHAT I CAN FIND?

ABSOLUTELY NOT! I FORBID YOU TO DO ANYTHING ILLEGAL ON MY BEHALF!

AWRIGHT, HAVE IT YOUR WAY! JUST REMEMBER, I GET PAID BY THE DAY! AND YOU ALREADY OWE ME A COUPLE GRAND!

YOU'LL GET YOUR MONEY, JUST KEEP DOING WHAT YOU'RE DOING! I WANT EVERYTHING TO BE ON THE UP-AND-UP!

HEY, NO PROBLEM...

...NO PROBLEM AT ALL. NOW, LET'S SEE... KENT'S APARTMENT BUILDING IS PRETTY FANCY... I'LL NEED MY BETTER LOCKPICKS.

SEVERAL GALAXIES AWAY...

;UHNGH?; WHERE AM I *NOW*?

AT LEAST I'M NOT *FALLING* THIS TIME...

...AND THAT LITTLE PLANET ACTUALLY LOOKS *INVITING!*

ABOUT THE SAME SIZE AND GRAVITY AS EARTH...

...*FLORA* AND *FAUNA* ARE A LITTLE DIFFERENT, BUT NOT OUTRAGEOUSLY SO.

AND THERE'S AIR... *REAL AIR!* SMELLS PRETTY GOOD... ALMOST LIKE *HOME!*

VREEEE

WHAT--?

VREEEEEE

< WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S HAPPENING?!>*

*Translated to standard English.

< COMPLETE SYSTEMS FAILURE...WE'VE LOST POWER TO ALL ENGINES! PREPARE TO --!>

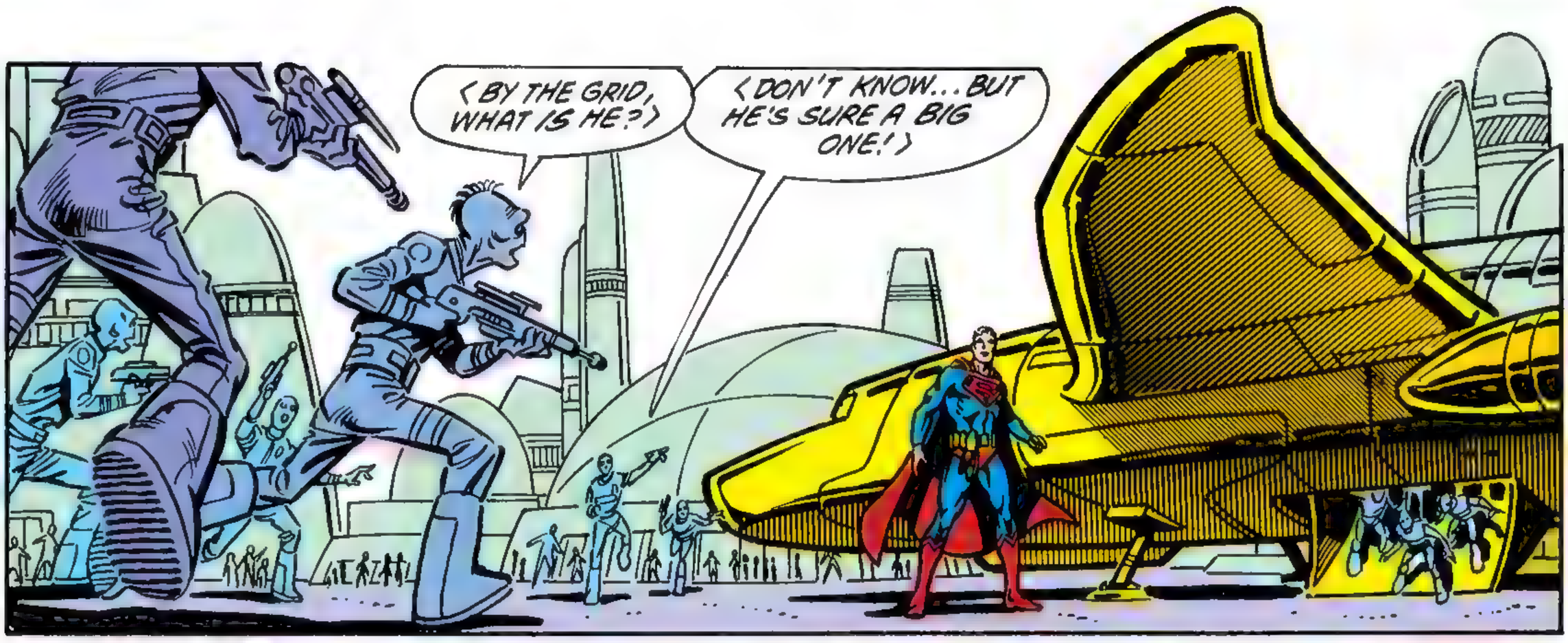
:?!?: < WHAT IS THIS? SHE'S RIGHTING HERSELF?!

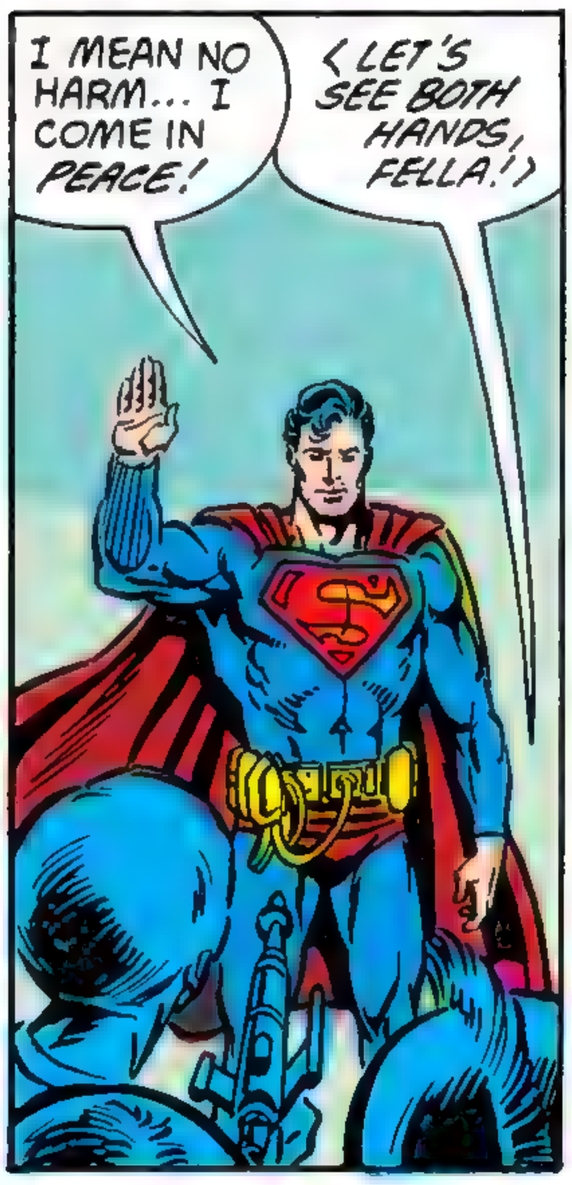
< NICE WORK, SKIPPER! I THOUGHT WE WERE GONERS!>

< THANKS... SO DID I... BUT I DON'T THINK I HAD ANY-THING TO DO WITH THIS! CAN'T FIGURE IT OUT... ALL SYSTEMS ARE STILL DOWN!>

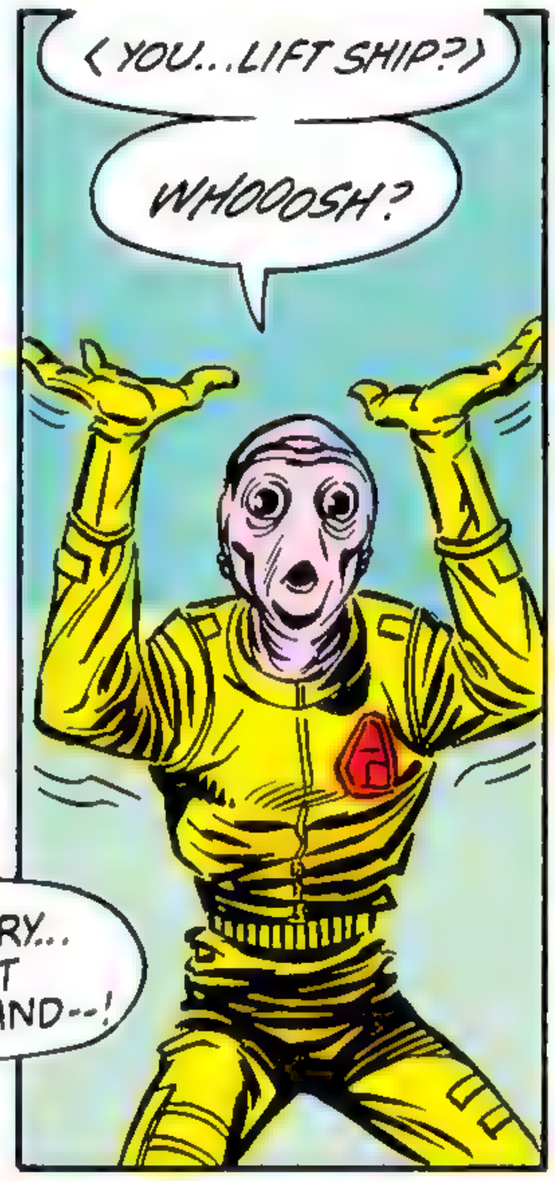
" < WHATEVER'S FLYING THIS THING... IT ISN'T ME!> "

THERE... THE *OPEN SPACE* ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THAT CITY HAS THE LOOK OF A *LANDING AREA*. I'LL FIND OUT SOON ENOUGH IF I'M WRONG!

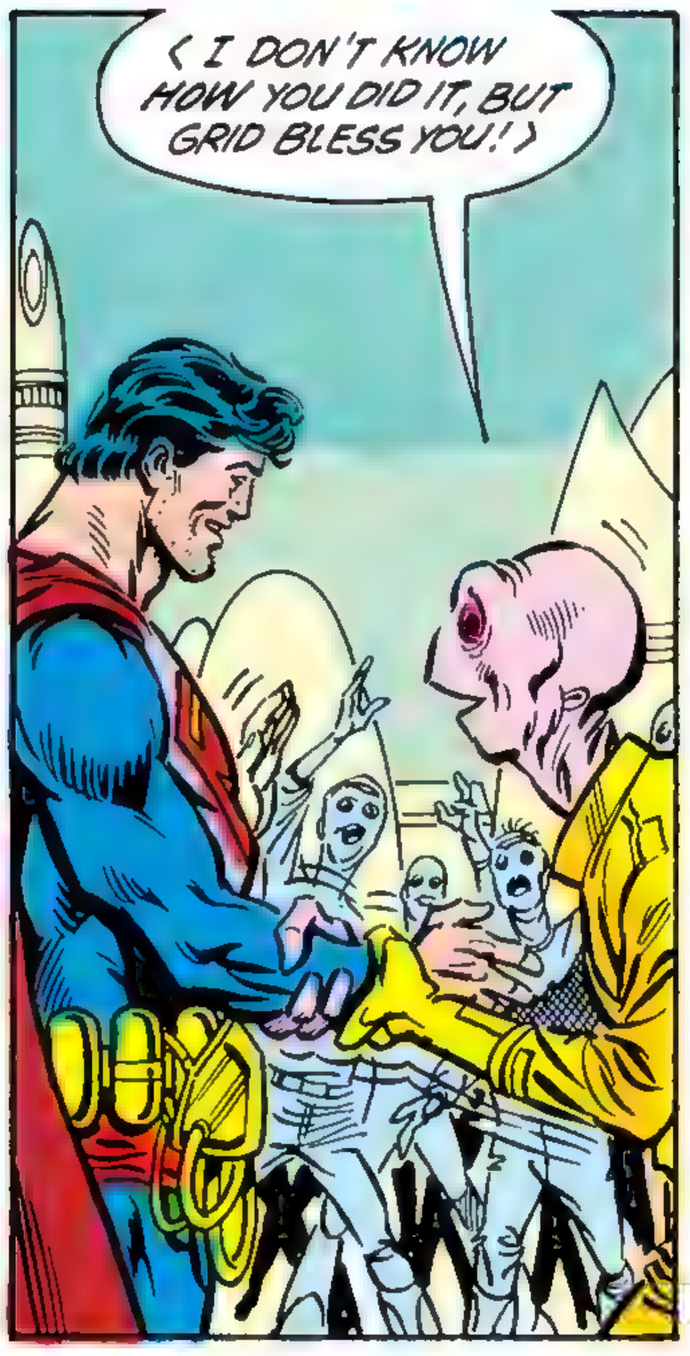

〈BY THE GRID, WHAT IS HE?〉
〈DON'T KNOW... BUT HE'S SURE A BIG ONE!〉

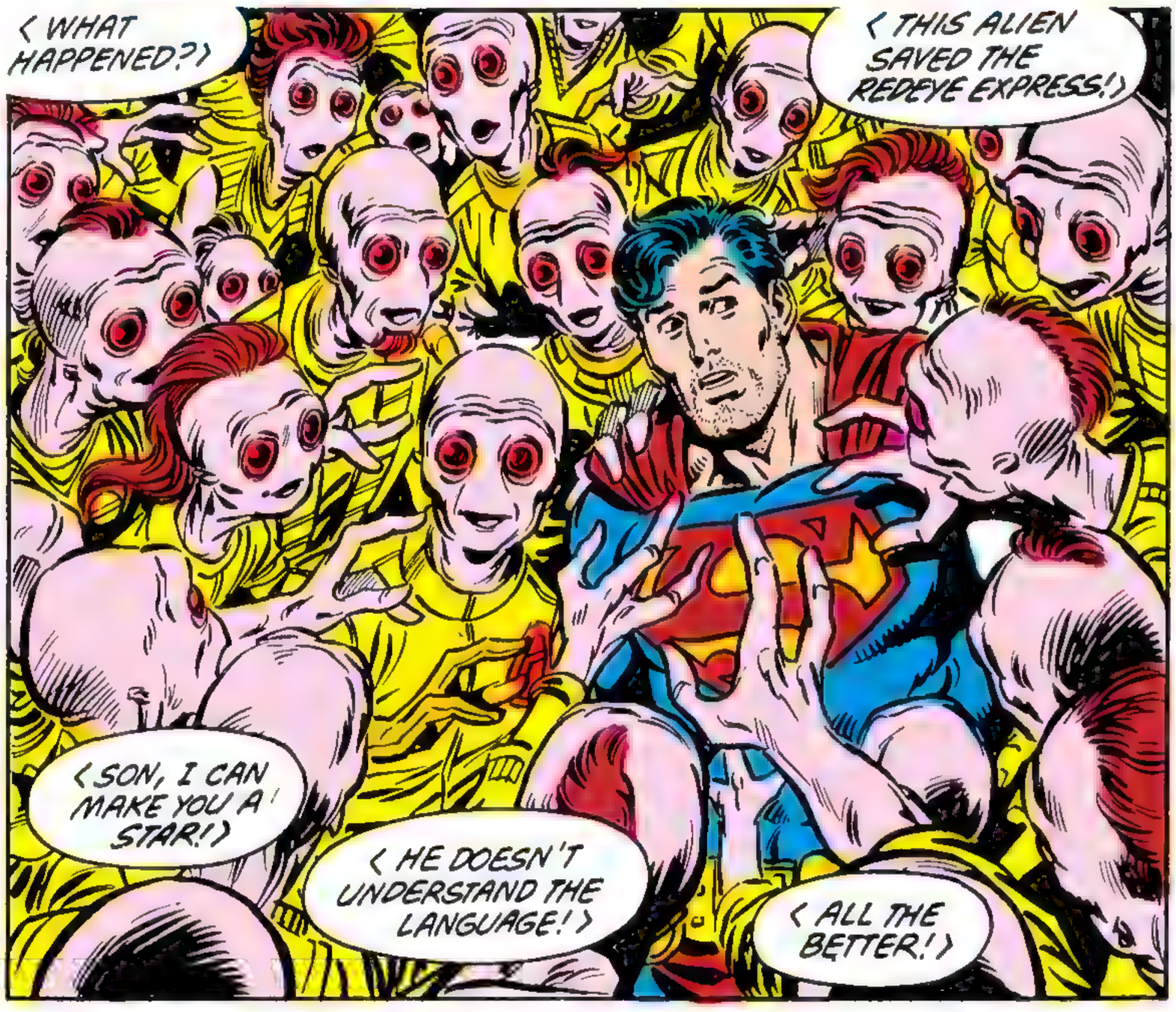

I MEAN NO HARM... I COME IN PEACE!
〈LET'S SEE BOTH HANDS, FELLA!〉

〈WHAT 'RE YOU DOING?! DON'T SHOOT HIM!〉
〈YOU...YOU SAVED MY SHIP?〉
I'M SORRY... I DON'T UNDERSTAND--!


〈YOU...LIFT SHIP?〉
WHOOOSH?

AH... YES!


〈I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU DID IT, BUT GRID BLESS YOU!〉


〈WHAT HAPPENED?〉
〈THIS ALIEN SAVED THE REDEYE EXPRESS!〉
〈SON, I CAN MAKE YOU A STAR!〉
〈HE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND THE LANGUAGE!〉
〈ALL THE BETTER!〉

'NO! IT'S STARTING AGAIN... JUST LIKE BEFORE... BACK ON EARTH!

THEY ALL WANT A *PART* OF ME!

<LOOK!>

<UP IN THE SKY--!>

I'M GLAD I WAS THERE TO HELP... BUT I DON'T *WANT* TO BECOME A HERO TO THESE BEINGS.

I MIGHT BECOME A *DANGER* TO THEM... JUST AS I BECAME TO THOSE ON EARTH.

GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE...

...FIND SOMEPLACE WHERE I DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT HURTING ANYBODY...

...SOMEPLACE WHERE I CAN BE *ALONE!*

344 CLINTON STREET, METROPOLIS...

THIS PLACE IS A *WRECK!* DID SOMEBODY BEAT US TO IT?

SHHH! THIS MUST BE HIM NOW!

*#!!@ DOORMAN! THOUGHT HE'D *NEVER* DOZE OFF.

EASY DOES IT... *HAH!* THERE WE GO!

IT'S ALL RIGHT, *FLUFFY!* IT'S JUST THAT NICE MR. KENT COMING HOME!

MRROW

ALL RIGHT, MATTHEW, LET'S SEE WHAT KIND OF SECRETS MR. KENT IS HIDING!

CRIMENY! LOOKS LIKE SOMEBODY TOOK A SLEDGEHAMMER TO THE PLACE!

KLIK

WHAT'S THIS...SOME KINDA CLASS RING? YEAH, "SMALLVILLE HIGH, CLASS OF--!"

SMALLVILLE

NO NEED TO WORRY ABOUT THE MESS, KENT!

WHAT?!

YOU NEVER SHOULD'VE CROSSED INTERGANG!

YOU'RE DEAD!

NEXT WEEK IN THE **ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN** > OUR HERO FINDS HIMSELF ON... DANGEROUS GROUND!

NEXT MONTH IN **SUPERMAN** > THE MAN OF STEEL IS FINALLY...ALONE!

DANGEROUS GROUND

SOMEWHERE IN THE VASTNESS OF SPACE, THE MAN OF STEEL MATERIALIZES AMID A SHOWER OF LIGHT.

THE TELEPORTATION DEVICE HE WEARS AROUND HIS WAIST HAS WHISKED HIM AWAY FROM A WORLD TOO MUCH LIKE EARTH...

A WORLD WHOSE EAGER INHABITANTS WOULD HAVE HIM AS THEIR PROTECTOR.

HE WAS ONCE EARTH'S CHAMPION, UNTIL HE LOST CONTROL AND BECAME A DANGER TO THOSE HE SWORE TO PROTECT.

HE WON'T LET THAT HAPPEN AGAIN!

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GLENN WHITMORE
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RENÉE WITTERSTAETTER
ASST. EDITOR
MIKEY CARLIN
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THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN

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THAT *CROWD*-- CLOSING IN ON *ME* AFTER I RESCUED THAT SHIP...*

...I *HAD* TO GET AWAY-- *ANYWHERE!*

THIS PLACE LOOKS SUITABLY UNINHABITED. *NOTHING* AND *NO ONE* TO BE BOTHERED BY MY PRESENCE.

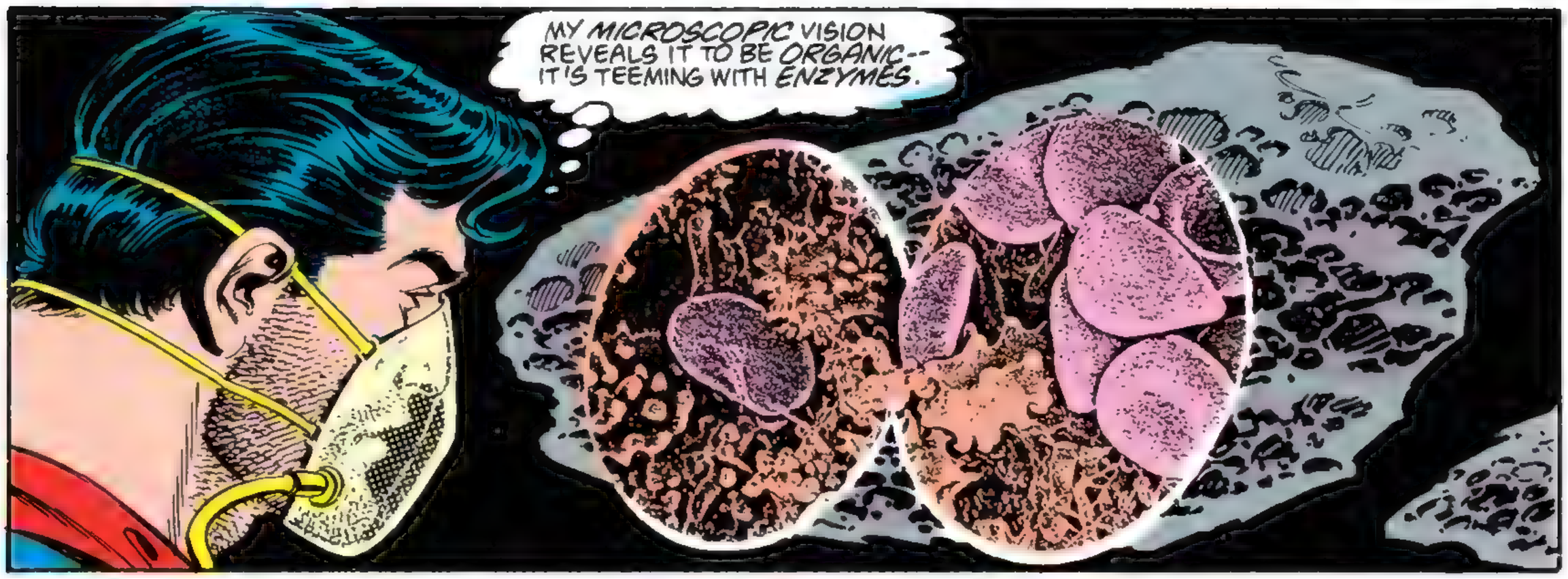
* *IN SUPERMAN #28*

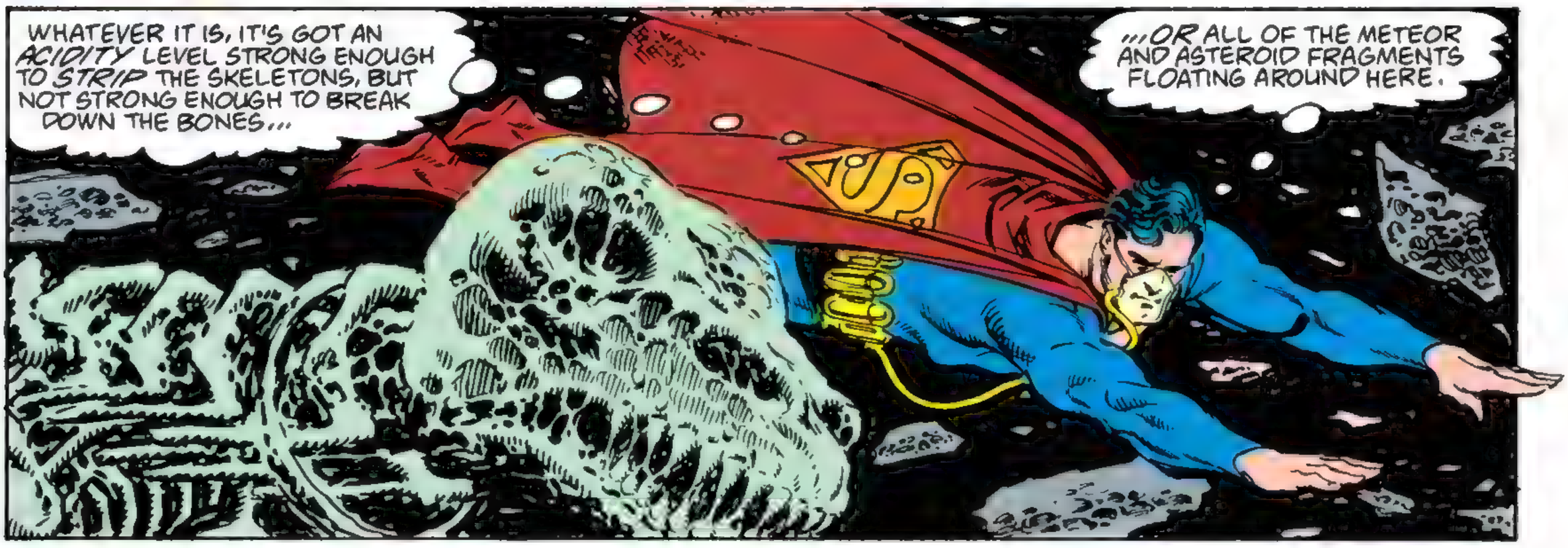
SCRATCH THAT. NOTHING *LIVING* TO BE BOTHERED BY ME.

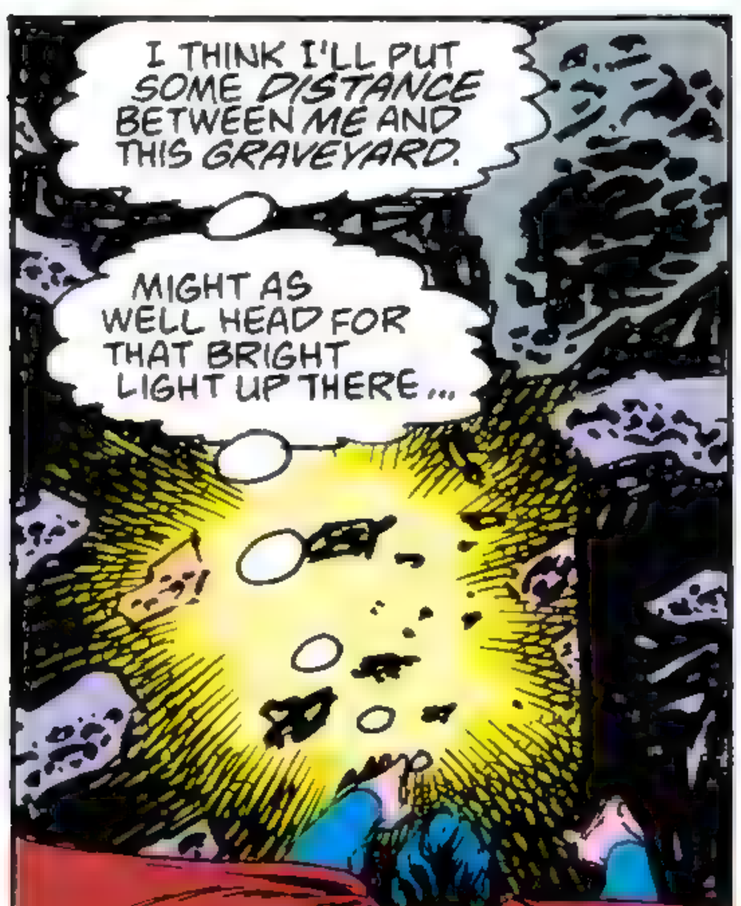
THE ADVANCED STATE OF DECOMPOSITION IN THIS CREATURE SEEMS *ODD*...

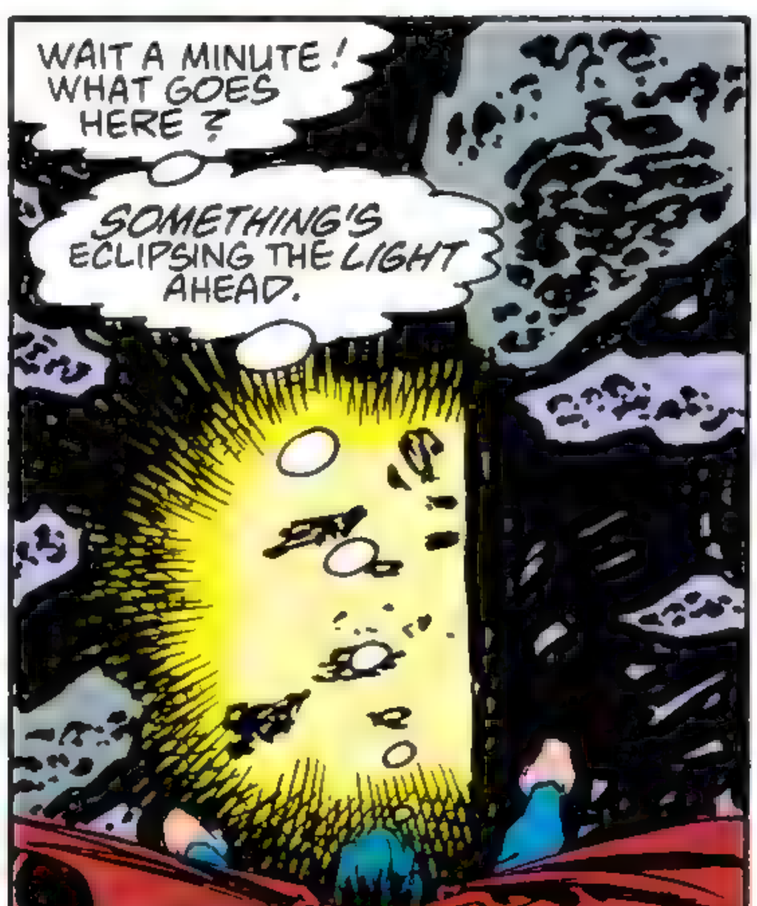
...*ALL* THAT'S HOLDING THE SKELETON TOGETHER IS SOME SORT OF *VISCOUS* SUBSTANCE.

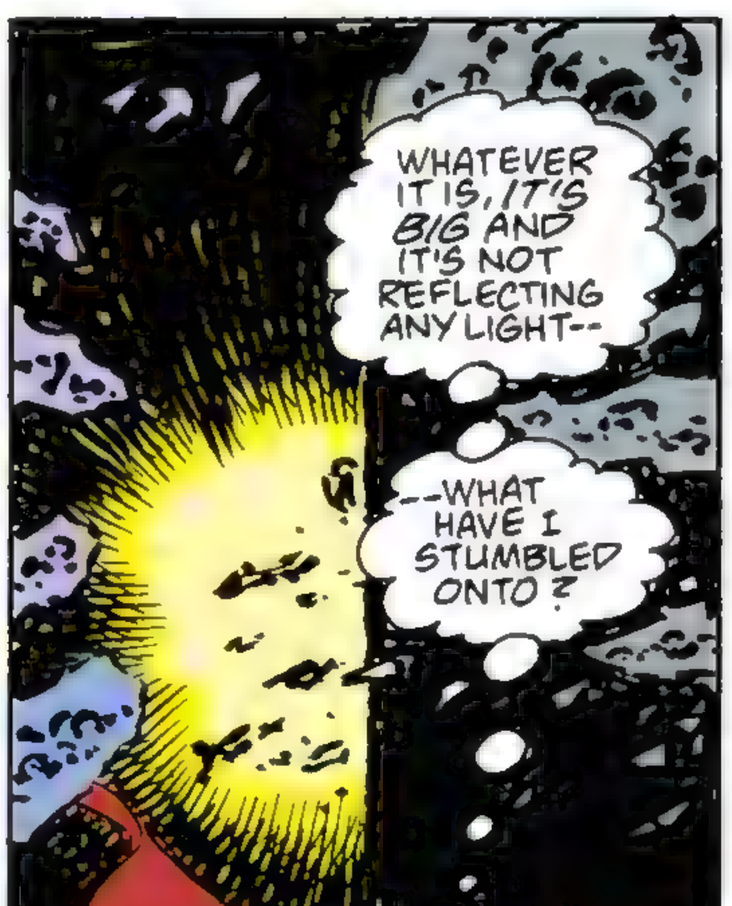
EVERYTHING IN THE VICINITY IS COVERED WITH THE *SLIME*, ALSO!


MY MICROSCOPIC VISION REVEALS IT TO BE ORGANIC-- IT'S TEEMING WITH ENZYMES.


WHATEVER IT IS, IT'S GOT AN ACIDITY LEVEL STRONG ENOUGH TO STRIP THE SKELETONS, BUT NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO BREAK DOWN THE BONES...
...OR ALL OF THE METEOR AND ASTEROID FRAGMENTS FLOATING AROUND HERE.


I THINK I'LL PUT SOME DISTANCE BETWEEN ME AND THIS GRAVEYARD.
MIGHT AS WELL HEAD FOR THAT BRIGHT LIGHT UP THERE...


WAIT A MINUTE! WHAT GOES HERE?
SOMETHING'S ECLIPSING THE LIGHT AHEAD.


WHATEVER IT IS, IT'S BIG AND IT'S NOT REFLECTING ANY LIGHT--
--WHAT HAVE I STUMBLED ONTO?

BLAST IT.! I WAS SO INTERESTED IN WHAT WAS IN *FRONT* OF ME, THAT I LEFT MY BACKSIDE UNPROTECTED!

MY GOD, THESE THINGS MOVE FAST!!

"LOOK AT THEM, INSPECTOR-- LIKE VULTURES SWARMING OVER A DEAD BODY."

ANY COMMENT?

HAS THERE BEEN *POSITIVE* IDENTIFICATION OF THE BODY YET?

WHEN CAN WE EXPECT A STATEMENT ON THIS CASE?

DO YOU HAVE ANY SUSPECTS?

THIS IS A MURDER SCENE, *NOT A PRESS CONFERENCE*. A STATEMENT WILL BE RELEASED LATER!

344 CLINTON

WLEX

STAND BACK. GIVE HIM ROOM.

WHAT'S THE STORY, CARL? WAS IT HIM?

NEIGHBOR LADY SEEMS TO THINK SO--SAW HIM ENTER THE PLACE...

HE WAS A *GOOD* REPORTER...

MAYBE *TOO GOOD!* SEE *THIS*?

MPD

MDP

PLANET

YEAH. IT'S AN INTRIGUING THOUGHT-- *INTERGANG'S VIPERS* STRIKING BACK FOR THE *EXPOSÉ*.

ROY, WHAT DO YOU HAVE FOR ME?

THIS WAS HERE IN THE ASHES-- LOOKS LIKE A *CLASS RING* OR SOMETHING.

SMALLVILLE

I'VE GOT SOME STICKY RESIDUE AROUND THE WINDOW SILLS.

NO FORCED ENTRY ON THE APARTMENT DOOR?

NOPE--IT LOOKS LIKE THEY CAME THROUGH THE WINDOW, AND SURPRISED HIM WHEN HE WALKED IN.

I'D LIKE TO TALK TO THE NEIGHBOR LADY.

MRS. TURK? I'M INSPECTOR HENDERSON. I WO--

I SAW HIM, OFFICER! THE *POOR MAN!* WHAT AN AWFUL WAY TO DIE!

YOU GOT A GOOD LOOK AT THE VICTIM? ARE YOU SURE IT WA--

"OH, IT WAS CLARK KENT, ALL RIGHT! I SAW HIM ENTER THE APARTMENT SECONDS BEFORE--HE DIED."

MRS. TURK, YOUR DOOR IS ACROSS THE HALL FROM KENT'S. DID YOU SEE HIS FACE?

NO, BUT I KNOW IT WAS HIM, WITH THAT OVERCOAT AND HAT ON.

WHO ELSE COULD IT BE AT *THAT* HOUR?

"HE CLOSED THE DOOR BEHIND HIM, BUT I COULD HEAR A VOICE SAY, 'YOU'RE DEAD, KENT'.

"THEN THERE WAS A *FLASH*, AND A SOUND LIKE A BIG BUG-ZAPPER!"

A *BUG-ZAPPER*, MA'AM?

YOU KNOW, ONE OF THOSE THINGS THEY USE IN THE *COUNTRY*, TO GET RID OF *PESTS*, LIKE *FLIES* OR *MOTHS*.

UH-HUH.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH. ONE OF OUR OFFICERS WILL TAKE YOUR STATEMENT, IF THEY *HAVEN'T* ALREADY.

I JUST HOPE YOU GET THE *PEOPLE* WHO DID THIS *HORRIBLE THING!*

NO ONE ELSE SAW OR HEARD ANYTHING UNUSUAL?

A FEW NOTICED THEIR LIGHTS DIM ABOUT THE TIME OF DEATH, OTHERS COMPLAINED THAT THEIR CLOCK-RADIOS WERE SCREWED UP THIS MORNING.

SMYHL

THIS WAS NO RUN-OF-THE-MILL *MOB HIT*. THIS WAS HIGH-TECH! ROY...

"YOU'D BETTER CONTACT MAGGIE SAWYER. IT'S TIME WE BROUGHT THE SPECIAL CRIMES UNIT IN ON THIS CASE!"

FINALLY HERE COMES HENDERSON!

LET'S CORNER 'IM, MOE.

WGBS

THAT ISN'T CLARK KENT IN THERE! I KNOW DIFFERENT.

MATTHEW STOCKTON IS DEAD... BECAUSE OF ME...

...BECAUSE I HIRED HIM TO HELP ME SPY ON KENT. I TOLD HIM NOT TO BREAK INTO THE APARTMENT-- NOT TO DO ANYTHING ILLEGAL.

WHY WOULDN'T HE JUST LISTEN?

BECAUSE THE HEADSTRONG JERK NEVER LISTENED TO AMANDA MCCOY. THAT'S WHY!

I CAN'T EVEN GO TO THE POLICE WITH ALL OF THIS. THERE'D BE TOO MANY QUESTIONS...

BESIDES, THE POLICE ARE APT TO PUT A HIGHER PRIORITY ON SOLVING THE MURDER OF A RESPECTED JOURNALIST, AS OPPOSED TO A DOWN-ON-HIS-LUCK P.I..

WHOEVER KILLED MATT THOUGHT HE WAS KILLING KENT, AND FOR THE TIME BEING, IT'S BEST HE THOUGHT HE SUCCEEDED.

BOB NENNO LIVE AT THE SCENE OF THE MURDER OF ONE OF METROPOLIS'S MOST NOTED REPORTERS...

WGBS

...CLARK KENT OF THE DAILY PLANET. POLICE ARE INVESTIGATING THE POSSIBILITY THAT THIS WAS A GANG RELATED CONTRACT HIT, BUT REFUSED TO ELABORATE...

GILLESPIE DESERVES A BONUS. THIS JOB'S GONE OFF WITHOUT A HITCH... BUT HIS NEXT JOB'LL BE HARDER...

GBS LIVE

"... I WANT HIM TO FIND THE PARASITE WHO SUPPLIED KENT WITH HIS INSIDE INFORMATION ON INTERGANG."

THESE THINGS ARE SMOTHERING ME -- THE MORE I RESIST, THE *TIGHTER* THEY GRIP!

I'D BETTER GIVE THEM A JOLT OF *HEAT VISION* TO DISLODGE THEM BEFORE THEY CRUSH MY BREATHING APPARATUS.

THAT SEEMED TO GET THEIR ATTENTION! NOW TO SHAKE THE OTHERS LOOSE.

HEY... THEY'RE LETTING GO ON THEIR OWN. I MUST NOT *TASTE* TOO GOOD.

I FEEL SORRY FOR THE ONE I BURNED... THE OTHERS ARE EATING HIM.

...LOOKS LIKE ONLY THE *STRONG* SURVIVE HERE.

THAT WOULD'VE BEEN ME... IF I HADN'T FOUGHT BACK--

BLAST! I'M *DEPLETING* MY OXYGEN TOO FAST!

I'D BETTER DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS SLIME, BEFORE IT EATS THROUGH MY AIR-HOSE.

A QUICK SPIN SHOULD SHAKE OFF THIS GOO.

THIS DOESN'T LOOK TOO BAD--SOME PITTING, BUT OTHERWISE OKAY.

I'M NOT USED TO RELYING ON *GADGETS*, BUT WITHOUT THIS STUFF I'D BE STRANDED--AND *DEAD!*

AS IT IS, MY OXYGEN SUPPLY'S NEARLY GONE. I REALLY HADN'T GIVEN MUCH THOUGHT TO *HOW* I'D REPLENISH IT ONCE I WAS IN DEEP SPACE.

THOSE *WET WILLIES* THAT ATTACKED ME ARE HEADING FOR THE LIGHT.

HOPE THEY'RE NOT AFTER ANYONE ELSE... MAYBE I'D BETTER FOLLOW THEM...

--*WAAAAY!*

STUPID! JUST BECAUSE I COULDN'T *SEE* ANYTHING DOESN'T MEAN SOMETHING'S *NOT THERE*.

IT'S SOME SORT OF *WALL*, BUT IT'S NOT REFLECTING ANY LIGHT!

STILL, A WALL OF *SPACE* DOESN'T MAKE ANY--

--HMMM... MY *X-RAY VISION* MIGHT SEE ON THE OTHER SIDE...

THERE'S THAT *BLOTTING* EFFECT AGAIN, AND IT'S MAKING ME LOSE THOSE SLIMERS! I CAN'T LET THEM GET A--

UGHHN! IT--MOVED! I CAUSED IT TO SPASM.

I SAW "THROUGH" IT, THOUGH-- LOTS AND LOTS OF STARS! LIKE LOOKING THROUGH A WARPED PIECE OF GLASS...

WHOA! NOW THIS "WALL" IS EXPANDING AND CONTRACTING, WILDLY TRYING TO SHAKE ME.

IT'S GOT TO BE SOME SORT OF SENTIENT LIFE-FORM-- I MUST BE CAUSING IT PAIN-- JUST BY BEING HERE.

THOSE SLIME-THINGS MIGHT BE A PART OF THIS THING, DIGESTING ALL THAT'S --

HOLY -- I'M INSIDE OF IT!

WHEN I USED THE TELEPORT HARNESS TO GET AWAY FROM THAT OTHER WORLD, I DID IT BLINDLY, WITH NO KNOWN DESTINATION!

I DIDN'T REALIZE HOW DANGEROUS THAT COULD BE.

WHAT IF I MATERIALIZED IN THE MIDDLE OF AN ENVIRONMENT AS LETHAL TO ME AS KRYPTONITE? OR, AS IT IS, IN THE MIDDLE OF ANOTHER LIVING BEING?

I'VE POPPED SMACK DAB INTO THE BELLY OF SOME GREAT BEAST...

...AND NOW IT'S FORCING ME TOWARD THAT LIGHT...

"...GUESS IT'LL BE GLAD TO BE RID OF ME."

HE'S GONE, HAPPERSEN. WHAT A GLORIOUS DAY.

SUPERMAN? HE'S ALWAYS COME BACK BEFORE, MR. LUTHOR.

TEND TO YOUR DUTIES, DOCTOR.

I WOULD AGREE WITH THAT, YOU FOOL, IF NOT FOR WHAT BRAINIAC TOLD ME BEFORE I HAD DR. KELLEY PUMP HIM FULL OF TRANQUILIZERS.*

HE BABBLED THAT HE'D LOST MENTAL CONTACT COMPLETELY WITH SUPERMAN.

*IN SUPERMAN #28.

IT WOULD BE WONDERFUL TO BELIEVE HIM DEAD, BUT THAT'S TOO MUCH TO HOPE FOR!

NEVERTHELESS, WITH HIM GONE, LEX LUTHOR IS ONCE MORE THE TOP DOG IN METROPOLIS!

MORGAN EDGE IS MY ONLY FORMIDABLE FOE, THANKS TO HIS POWERFUL CONNECTIONS.

I DARE NOT CONFRONT INTERGANG UNTIL I KNOW MORE OF THEIR MYSTERIOUS TIES!

UNTIL THEN I'LL SIMPLY ENJOY THE DAILY PLANET'S EXPOSÉ ON EDGE AND HIS ORGANIZATION.

ARE WE ON LINE YET?

CLIC-CLAC

YES, SIR.

THEN BRING HIM HERE. I HAVE AN ERRAND FOR MY NEW BODYGUARD, JOSE DELGADO.

MR. LUTHOR! IT'S NOT MY FAULT--HE JUST BARGED PAST ME!

CALM YOURSELF, MYRA. I SENT FOR HIM.

HELP ME WITH MY ROBE.

OH, OF COURSE, MR. L.

DON'T BOTHER TO SAY HELLO, DELGADO--WE WOULDN'T HEAR YOU ANYWAY!

THERE'S SOMETHING I'D LIKE YOU TO DO FOR ME, IN YOUR CAPACITY AS A LEXCORP EMPLOYEE...

...OH, WELL. NO USE CLUTTERING YOUR BRAIN WITH THE DETAILS...

...I'LL LET IT BE A SURPRISE.

WHY'S HE SO STILL, SO QUIET?

HIS EVERY MOVE IS CONTROLLED BY HAPPERSEN AT THE COMPUTER KEYBOARD. WE CAN EVEN SEE FROM HIS POINT OF VIEW, VIA A HELMET-MOUNT CAMERA.

CLIC CLAC

CLIC CLAC

SO HE WON'T SEND OLD LADIES INTO FITS, HE'S EQUIPPED WITH A HOLOGRAPHIC CLOAKING DEVICE.

HE'S HANDSOME--OR IS THAT AN ILLUSION, TOO?

I CAN ASSURE YOU, MY DEAR, THAT IS HIS FACE, THOUGH UNDER THE CLOAK, HE'S MOST ASSUREDLY NOT SMILING.

SEND HIM ON HIS WAY, HAPPERSEN.

DAMN YOU, LUTHOR...

LEXCORP SECURITY

WELL, MYRA, WHAT HAVE YOU GOT FOR ME? I'VE GOT A MEETING WITH THE PLANNING COMMISSION IN FIFTEEN MINUTES.

OUR PEOPLE HAVE IDENTIFIED THE MAN WHO SAVED YOU WHEN MAX CARTER OPENED FIRE ON YOU AT METRO-MEMORIAL HOSPITAL.*

VIDEO FOOTAGE REVEALED YOUR GUARDIAN ANGEL TO BE *CLARK KENT.*

THE *PLANET* REPORTER? HIS BY-LINE IS ON THE *INTERGANG* EXPOSÉ THEY'RE RUNNING!

HA! WITH ALL HE'S DONE *FOR* LEXCORP, ARE YOU *SURE* HE'S NOT ALREADY ON MY PAYROLL?

CLARK KENT IS *DEAD*, MR. L. HE WAS APPARENTLY MURDERED IN HIS APARTMENT LAST NIGHT.

WH--AAT?

I OWE HIM MY LIFE, MS. RIVIERA! LEX LUTHOR ALWAYS PAYS IN FULL!

I DIDN'T BUILD THIS EMPIRE BY *OWING* ANYONE! *PEOPLE* OWE *ME!*

HMMMM-- THERE IS A WAY...

...OUR OPERATIVES MUST TRACK DOWN HIS KILLERS...

HOW DO YOU PAY BACK A DEAD GUY?

*IN ADVENTURES #447

"...AND DISPOSE OF THEM!"

THERE ARE THE THINGS THAT SLIMED ME EARLIER, STILL HEADING INTO THE LIGHT...

...GUESS THEY *WEREN'T* GOING AFTER ANOTHER *VICTIM* AFTER ALL. PERHAPS THEY'RE FOLLOWING A REGULAR ROUTINE.

I'D *HOPED* THAT IF I DIDN'T RESIST IT, THE CREATURE WOULD JUST EXPEL ME FROM ITS *BODY*...

...BUT THAT BALL OF LIGHT-ENERGY IT'S PUSHING ME TOWARD IS LOOKING MORE LIKE AN INCINERATOR THAN AN EXIT!

AT LEAST I'M FARTHER AWAY FROM THIS THING'S INTERIOR WALLS...

THE WAY IT *ABSORBED* LIGHT WITHOUT ALLOWING ANY TO REFLECT OFF INDICATES *SOME SORT OF GRAVITY*-LIKE FIELD AT WORK.

MY TELEPORTER DIDN'T FUNCTION PROPERLY LAST TIME I WAS NEAR A STRONG GRAVITATIONAL PULL.

ALL THIS IS PRETTY *RADICAL* FOR A GUY WHO LIKED TO RELY SOLELY ON *HIMSELF* FOR *HELP*...

PROFESSOR HAMILTON'S OXYGEN APPARATUS, AND AN ALIEN TELEPORTATION HARNESS THE OMEGA MEN SUPPL--*WHAT?!*

ONE OF THOSE GLOBES OF LIGHT-- MY ARM'S *GONE NUMB* WHERE IT HIT ME! FROM A DISTANCE, THEY LOOKED LIKE STARS!

IT'S A *GOOD* BET THAT THE *MAIN* LIGHT *SOURCE* HOLDS THE SAME PROPERTIES AS THESE MINIATURES...

I'VE GOT TO STOP THIS PARADE BEFORE I TAKE THE PLUNGE LIKE MY SLIME-FRIENDS UP AHEAD!

RI-ING!

FORD

RI-ING!

HELLO? TOBY RAYNES HERE, AND I--

NO TOBY HERE! :CLICK:

GEORGE TAYLOR EDITOR

DAILY STAR

SUPERMAN GONE

MATRIX, WAS THAT THE PHONE?

YES, JON-A-THAN.

WHO WAS IT?

PA--WHAT'S *WRONG*? MAE DIDN'T *BREAK* SOMETHING AGAIN, DID SHE?

OH, NO. SHE'S JUST BEEN ANSWERING THE *PHONE*, THAT'S ALL.

RI-ING!

HOLD IT, MAE-- I'VE GOT IT *THIS* TIME.

DEAR, IF YOU'RE GOING TO LOOK AT THESE PICTURES OF CLARK, I *WISH* YOU WOULDN'T TAKE THEM OUT OF THEIR FRAMES!

HELLO? IS THIS MR. KENT? *PLEASE DON'T HANG UP!* MY NAME IS TOBY RAYNES OF THE *METROPOLIS STAR*.

LOOK, I KNOW A LOT OF PEOPLE HAVE BEEN CALLING YOU FOLKS, AND I'M *SORRY* TO BE ONE OF THEM...

I WAS A FRIEND OF CLARK'S. WHEN I HEARD THE NEWS...

UH, HIS BIG STORY, YOU MEAN?

BIG STORY? MY GOD, YOU DON'T KNOW? HE'S GONE, MR. KENT. I'M SO SORRY TO--

THIS MAY BE A SMALL TOWN MS. RAYNES, BUT WE GET THE NEWS HERE TOO.

WE KNOW HE'S GONE. HE CAME TO STAY WITH US 'TIL HIS BIG STORY WAS FINISHED.

YES, I'M SURE HE'S HERE-- WHERE ELSE WOULD HE BE? OUTER SPACE?

NO. HE DOESN'T WANT ANY VISITORS ...YES... GOODBYE.

SOMETHING FISHY'S GOING ON. IF CLARK KENT'S IN SMALLVILLE, WHO WAS KILLED IN HIS APARTMENT?

PA! WHY ON EARTH DID YOU LIE LIKE THAT?

OH, MARTHA, WE'VE BEEN TELLING TALL TALES SINCE CLARK'S SPACECRAFT LANDED HERE.

'SIDES, WE'RE SENDING HIS STORIES TO THE DAILY PLANET LIKE HE ASKED US TO--THEY'RE BOUND TO NOTICE THE POSTMARK.

MAE? HOW MANY PHONE CALLS CAME IN WHILE WE WERE OUTSIDE?

TEN FINGERS, JON-A-THAN.

BETTER GET SOME MORE TALL TALES READY, PA!

AND AS FOR YOU, GIRL, I'M WORRIED OVER YOU SPENDING SO MUCH TIME STARING AT MY PICTURES OF CLARK!

WE BRING HIM UP AS AN EXAMPLE TO YOU, BUT WE DON'T EXPECT YOU TO BE LIKE HIM...

"...IT'S NOT GOOD TO TRY TO BE SOMETHING YOU'RE NOT."

JERRY, WHAT'S WRONG?

TAMMY, SOMETHING'S COME UP! I'LL MEET YOU BACK AT YOUR PLACE.

...RLIN'S ...OUSE O' ...OUCHES

Jonathan's HOUSE OF FINE Women

JUST SAY "NO" TO DRUGS

HEY! JOSE! JOSE DELGADO! IT'S ME, JERRY! JOSE!

I'VE BEEN *LOOKING* FOR HIM FOR *DAYS*, AND NOW THAT I'VE FOUND HIM, HE *PRETENDS* NOT TO *KNOW* ME!

THAT'S JUST NOT *LIKE* HIM...

HIS CAB'S MOVING PRETTY SLOW IN THIS TRAFFIC--I HOPE HE'S NOT GOING *FAR*.

JOSE HAS BEEN ACTING STRANGE SINCE HE'S BEEN *BACK* ON HIS *FEET*--I'VE *GOT* TO KNOW *WHY*.

HERE YOU ARE, MISTER. 'AT'LL BE SIX-FIFTY.

HAMILTON

JOE

FRANK

BZZZZZ

EMIL HAMILTON.

DELIVERY FROM S.T.A.R. LABS!

S01

HAMILTON?

YES, BUT YOU'RE NOT THE REGULAR MESSENG--

GREETINGS FROM *LEXCORP*, PROFESSOR!

WE'RE SURPRISED AT YOUR *ARROGANCE*...

YOU'VE BEEN *INFRINGING* ON OUR *PATENTS*...

THIS END UP

...PATENTS THAT ARE LEGALLY REGISTERED TO *LEXCORP!*

THOSE ARE FOR THINGS *I* INVENTED, YOU MONSTER! MY *LIFE'S WORK!*

THEN YOUR *LIFE* BELONGS TO *LEX LUTHOR!* YOUR ORIGINAL WORK WAS DONE FOR *HI-TEK*, AND *COMPUCON*, BOTH LEXCORP HOLDINGS!

WHY'D HE *WAIT SO LONG?* WHY NOT TAKE ME TO *COURT!?*

YOUR *BENEFACTOR*, SUPERMAN, IS *GONE*, OLD MAN! *THAT* IS WHY I'M HERE *NOW.*

THIS *LAB* WILL CLOSE DOWN IMMEDIATELY, AND YOU WILL BE *WELCOMED* BACK TO *LEXCORP*, PROFESSOR.

TAKE JUST ONE MORE STEP FORWARD, ROBOT!

I'D SOONER *DIE* THAN SWEAT FOR LEX LUTHOR *AGAIN.*

THAT IS NOT AN *OPTION.*

CHEW ON THIS, *BUSTER!*

WHAT IS HE--? *QUICK!* GET *BRAINIAC* IN HERE!

WE'RE *LOSING* THE PICTURE...

YOU'VE STEPPED RIGHT INTO THE PATH OF MY *MAGNETIC FIELD GENERATOR.*

I'M SURPRISED *LUTHOR* FORGOT ABOUT IT-- NOTHING CAN GET *IN* OR *OUT...*

... INCLUDING THE *RADIO* SIGNALS YOU'RE CONTROLLED BY.

WAIT, MISTER!

THERE'S A *MAN* INSIDE THAT SUIT-- HE'S MY *FRIEND...*

HE'S NOT IN *CONTROL!*

WHO ARE *YOU?*

THAT'S *NOT* IMPORTANT! HE CAN'T *WALK* WITHOUT SOME KIND OF COMPUTER *STUFF...*

A COMPUTER *SEQUENCING* PROGRAM? AGAINST HIS WILL?

I *DESIGNED* A *SIMILAR* THING FOR *ROBOTICS*--MAYBE I CAN FIGURE A WAY TO *OVERRIDE* HIS *SYSTEM!*

"I'VE GOT AN IDEA, BUT I WILL NEED YOUR HELP, SON."

HAMILTON NO DOUBT USED HIS FORCE FIELD TO BLOCK OUR ELECTRONIC SIGNALS TO DELGADO, BUT BY LINKING *BRAINIAC* TO OUR COMPUTER, WE CAN REGAIN CONTROL OF HIM *MENTALLY!*

I DON'T KNOW... I *THINK* DOCTOR KELLEY'S *MEDICATION* WAS TOO *STRONG...*

"WE'LL NEED A FEW MINUTES TO BRING HIM AROUND."

CAN YOU MOVE? I NEED YOU TO REMOVE YOUR HELMET.

ARMS-- WEIGH A TON...

HE *DID* IT!

CLIK!

CLIK!

I'M DROPPING THE *FIELD* FOR A SECOND...

...PUSH THE HELMET TO ME!

BRAINIAC!! IT'S NO USE! DR. KELLEY WILL HEAR ABOUT THIS!

GET HAMILTON ON THE PHONE!

SLAP!

I'VE GOT IT, SIR. WE'RE ALSO GETTING VIDEO AGAIN...

HELLO, LEX! I CAN SEE YOU NOW AS WELL. I'VE SPLICED INTO THE MONITOR I FOUND INSIDE OF YOUR ASSASSIN'S HELMET!

LOOK, AND LISTEN, HAMILTON -- YOU ARE A WALKING DEAD MAN!

YOU HAD BETTER BE PREPARED TO KEEP THAT FIELD OF YOURS ON TWENTY-FOUR HOURS A DAY FROM HERE ON IN...

THERE'S AN EXPLOSNE CHARGE ON THAT ARMOR THAT'LL BLOW YOU ALL TO KINGDOM COME, AND THE DETONATOR IS IN MY HANDS!

HOLD ON TO THOSE BLOOD VESSELS -- I'VE GOT A SURPRISE COMING UP!

SON, ARE YOU READY AT THE WINDOW?

LEX LUTHOR, THIS IS YOUR LIFE!

HEY! WHAT HAPPENED TO MY SOAP OPERA?

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I'M PROUD TO INTRODUCE METROPOLIS'S PREMIER PATRON, MR. LEX LUTHOR!

WHAT'S THAT SKINHEAD DOING ON?

WHERE'S THE BASKETBALL GAME?

IT'S ON ALL DA CHANNELS!

LEX IS A GIVER, NOT A TAKER! HE'S GIVEN THIS MAN, WHO PREVIOUSLY COULD NOT WALK, THE BENEFITS OF THE TECHNICAL WIZARDRY OF LEXCORP...

HAMILTON, YOU'RE DEAD...

BOSS! YOU'RE ON LIVE TV! SOMEONE'S BROKEN IN ON ALL THE STATIONS!

...UH, DEAD RIGHT, THAT IS...

GET BRAINIAC OUT OF THE PICTURE...

BUT PROFESSOR HAMILTON... I COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU.

GRACIOUS AS ALWAYS, LEX. YOU'VE DONATED OVER A MILLION DOLLARS WORTH IN TECHNOLOGY TO MAKE THIS MAN WALK AGAIN!

UM, YES, THAT'S RIGHT. MR. JOSE DELGADO HAS A NEW LEASE ON LIFE THANKS TO LEXCORP...

I FEEL JITTERY WITH THE FORCE-FIELD-THING OFF.

HE WON'T KILL US ON LIVE TELEVISION.

I HOPE!

THERE! I GOT IT! REST EASY, SON.

UH, LEX, I THINK WE'VE TAKEN TOO MUCH TIME ALREADY SO WITH THAT I BID YOU ADIEU, AND RETURN YOU TO YOUR REGULAR PROGRAMS.

THANK YOU PROFESSOR. I WON'T SOON FORGET THI: :SQUAWK:

BOSS! WE KNOCKED THEM OFF THE AIR!

TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE!

THE PHONE LINE IS STILL OPEN, HAMILTON-- YOU CAN STILL HEAR ME...

...YOU AND YOUR NEW FRIENDS THINK YOU'RE PRETTY CLEVER, BUT REMEMBER ONE THING...

I DO NOT GET MAD-- I GET EVEN!

CRASH!

OH, I'M SURE YOU'LL TRY!

BY THE BY, THE *FCC* WILL PROBABLY BE ALL OVER YOUR WIDE TAIL FOR THIS STUNT! THE *PIRATED* SIGNALS ORIGINATED FROM *WLEX'S TOWER!*

ONE MORE THING...

YOU COULD *KILL* ME TOMORROW, AND I'D DIE HAPPY. BECAUSE I *HURT* YOU...

"*MY ASSOCIATION WITH SUPERMAN HAS INSTILLED IN ME THE COURAGE TO STAND UP TO YOU... AND I'M GRATEFUL TO HIM, WHEREVER HE IS!*"

I'VE GOT TO MAKE ANOTHER "*JUMP*" AND FAST...

...NOW MY LEG'S GONE NUMB, FROM ONE OF THOSE LIGHT-SPHERES.

AFTER *THIS* EXPERIENCE, I COULD USE AN ENVIRONMENT *SIMILAR* TO EARTH'S...

...MAYBE I CAN *BACKSPACE* THE TELEPORTER TO SEND ME NEAR THE LAST PLACE I VISITED...*

*SUPERMAN #28.

...ALL THOSE LITTLE PEOPLE *SEEMED* TO LIKE ME...

...I JUST HOPE I'M *STILL* WELCOME THERE.

GOOD-BYE BEHEMOTH-- NO HARD FEELINGS...

...YOU WERE JUST DEFENDING YOURSELF AGAINST AN UNWANTED INTRUDER.

"I'LL BE MORE CAREFUL IN THE FUTURE."

NEXT IN SUPERMAN #29 AND ADVENTURES #452, A SPECIAL TWO-PART STORY WHERE THE MAN OF STEEL CONFRONTS THE RETURN OF THE WORDBRINGER!

SUPERMAN®

Created by JERRY SIEGEL & JOE SHUSTER

"<SHIP'S DIARY: FINAL ENTRY: SITUATION DESPERATE. OUR GUIDANCE SYSTEM'S GONE AWRY, RESULTING IN A CRASH IN THE MIDDLE OF AN ASTEROID PACK.>

"<THE SHIP'S STARDRIVE IS BEYOND REPAIR AND ALL LIFE-SUPPORT SYSTEMS ARE EXHAUSTED. ONLY MY SURVIVAL SUIT KEEPS ME ALIVE.>

"<COMMANDER Z'XL DIED THIS MORNING... WITH THE REST OF THE CREW. SOON MAROONED HERE IN THIS DESOLATE SECTION OF SPACE, I, TOO, SHALL STEP INTO THE ABYSS OF DEATH.>

"<FUNNY HOW WE'D INTENDED TO ESCAPE THIS FATE BY FLEEING OUR CURSED WORLD.>

"<AND IF MY MATE AND CHILDREN CAN HEAR THESE, MY LAST WORDS IN THE REALM OF DEATH, PLEASE KNOW THAT I AM HEARTILY SORRY FOR WHAT'S HAPPENED.>

G-4515

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"<AND PLEASE REMEMBER ME AT MY BETTER MOMENTS AND FORGIVE MY SINS.>

"<TRANSMISSION OVER, NAVIGATOR D'DLYN.>

"<WAIT!>

"<THE SHIP SHIFTS AS THOUGH IT IS BEING MOVED! AND THAT RED BLUR...>

"<IS THIS ALL A MIRAGE DUE TO OXYGEN DEPRIVATION?>

"<NO! SOME... THING IS ON THE HULL NEAR THE DAMAGED AREA.>

"<MY EXTERIOR SENSORS ARE STILL FUNCTIONAL. INCREDIBLE AS IT SOUNDS...>

"<...THE HULL'S BREACH IS BEING REPAIRED! SOME TYPE OF INTENSE, CONCENTRATED HEAT IS ACTUALLY FUSING THE SHARDS BACK INTO PLACE!>

"<THE BEING RESPONSIBLE ENTERS. HIS STRENGTH... HIS POWERS... MUST BORDER ON THE INFINITE>

"<IS HE AN ENEMY-- A PREDATOR TO BE FEARED?>

"<OR IS HE A SAVING ANGEL... AN EMISSARY OF A GOD SENT TO COLLECT THE SOULS OF THE DYING?>"

I REALIZE WE CAN'T CONVERSE IN THE VACUUM OF SPACE, FRIEND...

...BUT PERHAPS YOU CAN READ MY THOUGHTS.

MY NAME IS SUPERMAN...

...AND I VISITED YOUR WORLD MERE DAYS AGO.*

I MUST ADMIT NOW THAT YOUR PEOPLE HAD OVERWHELMED ME FOR A MOMENT...

...AND I USED MY TELEPORTATION DEVICE A LITTLE HASTILY. WITH MY AIR GOING FAST IT DIDN'T TAKE ME LONG TO REALIZE THAT WE MAY HAVE HELPED EACH OTHER.

*Last Issue.

SO WHEN I "BACK-SPACED" MY TELEPORTER TO RETURN TO YOUR WORLD,** I SPOTTED YOUR DISABLED SHIP.

AND I SEE NOW THAT YOUR SITUATION IS FAR MORE *DIRE* THAN MY OWN. MY OXYGEN SUPPLY CAN WAIT IF YOU--

**ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN #451

UNCONSCIOUS. TANKS EMPTY. IF HE DOESN'T GET SOMETHING TO BREATHE HE'LL BE DEAD WITHIN MINUTES!

BUT IF THIS SHIP'S CREW COULDN'T REPAIR ITS OWN LIFE-SUPPORT SYSTEM, WHAT CHANCE DO I HAVE?

JUST HAVE TO HOPE THAT THIS ALIEN TECHNOLOGY IS EASILY GRASPED AND EASILY FIXED!

THIS IS OBVIOUSLY THE SHIP'S CENTRAL ENGINEERING SECTION AND FROM THE LOOKS OF THINGS I'D SAY THE PROBLEM IS A BURNED *POWER CORE!*

WHATEVER HAPPENED HERE MUST HAVE HAPPENED FAST.

LOOKS LIKE MOST OF THE CREW DIDN'T EVEN HAVE THE CHANCE TO SLIP INTO SURVIVAL GEAR!

WITH THE HULL SEALED, A REPAIRED SYSTEM SHOULD KEEP THE SHIP FILLED WITH ATMOSPHERE.

NO TIME TO FIX EVERY CIRCUIT-- EVEN IF I COULD! BUT IF THAT ASTRONAUT IS GOING TO SURVIVE I'VE GOT TO TRY *SOMETHING!*

ONE CHANCE -- IF I CAN DISCONNECT ALMOST EVERY OTHER SYSTEM AND CHANNEL LIFE-SUPPORT STRAIGHT INTO THE POWER CORE!

GOOD THING PA KENT TAUGHT ME HOW TO REPAIR OUR TRACTORS AND OTHER HEAVY MACHINERY ON THE FARM!

NOT THAT THIS SHIP IS THE EQUIVALENT OF A JOHN DEERE, BUT SIMPLE PHYSICS STILL APPLIES AND TO POWER ANY VEHICLE YOU NEED SOME KIND OF ENERGY OR A BATTERY!

AND WITH ANY LUCK AT ALL MY *HEAT VISION* WILL HAVE JUST ENOUGH PUNCH TO RE-IGNITE THE SHIP'S CORE!

VOILA!

NOT MUCH-- CERTAINLY NOT ENOUGH TO POWER THE STARDRIVE--BUT IT SHOULD KEEP LIFE-SUPPORT ON LINE FOR A FEW DAYS!

I CAN ALREADY FEEL THE SHIP RE-PRESSURIZING AND STILLING WITH ATMOSPHERE!

JUST HAVE TO HOPE THIS POOR GUY HASN'T ALREADY SUFFOCATED IN HIS HELMET!

EASY, FRIEND. RELAX, TAKE SLOW DEEP BREATHS, AND YOU'LL BE JUST FINE.

STILL CAN'T UNDERSTAND A WORD THESE GUYS SAY! HIS LANGUAGE BEARS LITTLE SIMILARITY TO ANY OF THE EARTH LANGUAGES I'VE STUDIED OR EVEN THE LITTLE *KRYPTONESE* I'VE HEARD.

AH, A STAR CHART SHOWING YOUR HOME PLANET, HUH? BUT... WHERE YOU'RE POINTING'S ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SYSTEM?

OKAY... OKAY... CALM DOWN... I DON'T KNOW *WHY* YOU'RE IN SUCH A HURRY--

--BUT GETTING YOU OUT OF HERE IS NOT AS BIG A PROBLEM AS YOU MIGHT THINK!

FIRST THINGS FIRST, THOUGH. EVEN I CAN'T SURVIVE IN SPACE WITHOUT AIR, NOR CAN I HOLD MY BREATH FOREVER!

YOUR ATMOSPHERE IS SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT FROM EARTH'S, BUT MY LIFE-SUPPORT BELT CAN COLLECT IT, PROCESS IT INTO SOMETHING MORE SUITABLE, AND STORE IT IN MY TANKS. AND WITH THAT DONE...

...WE'LL START YOU ON YOUR WAY. GET BACK TO YOUR CONTROL BOARD, FRIEND. YOU SUPPLY THE STEERING AND I'LL SUPPLY THE BOOST.

CERTAINLY NO PROBLEM *LIFTING* THE SHIP.

BUT WITHOUT GRAVITY IT WILL BE VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO THROW IT FAR. IF I TRIED DOING THAT FROM THIS ASTEROID THE SHIP WOULD GO ONE WAY WHILE I WENT THE OTHER.

I NEED A BASE-- SOMETHING I CAN GET A GOOD, FIRM FOOTING ON AND THAT MEANS GRAVITY!

AND THIS SMALL PLANET SHOULD FIT THE BILL PERFECTLY!

GOOD. THE SURFACE IS HARD --ROCKY! I DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT SINKING INTO IT! AND THE GRAVITY HERE ISN'T STRONG ENOUGH TO PREVENT ME FROM THROWING THE SHIP!

A GOOD TOSS WILL GIVE THE SHIP ONE PARTIAL ORBIT AROUND THE SUN...

ONCE I LINE UP WITH THE TRAJECTORY THAT LITTLE FELLOW SUGGESTED--TOWARD THIS GALAXY'S SUN-- WE'RE IN BUSINESS!

...AND THEN ITS *GRAVITY* WILL TAKE HOLD AND "*SLING SHOT*" THE SHIP HOME.

BON VOYAGE, FRIEND.

LONG AFTER THE ALIEN VESSEL DISAPPEARS INTO THE VOID, HE STANDS WATCHING.

LIKE A CHILD TRANSFIXED BY A FALLING STAR, HE ALMOST SEEMS TO WANT TO SAY, "COME BACK".

BUT HE KNOWS HE CANNOT DO THAT.

FOR ONCE HE LOST CONTROL ...AND NOW... HIS VERY EXISTENCE IS A DANGER TO THOSE HE ENCOUNTERS.

AND, AS HE HAS ALWAYS ANSWERED THE CALL OF JUSTICE, SO NOW MUST HE SURRENDER TO HER GRASP.

THE SENTENCE FOR HIS CRIME:

SELF-IMPOSED EXILE.

NEVER AGAIN WILL HE PUT EARTH, OR PEOPLE OF ANY WORLD, IN JEOPARDY.

FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE, HIS TROUBLED SOUL WILL KNOW NO PEACE.

FROM NOW ON HE MUST WALK ALONE.

TOTALLY...

COMPLETELY...

...ALONE.

IF THIS BE MY FATE

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asst. editor

MIKE CARLIN
editor

and a tip of the sombrero to JERRY ORDWAY for plot assistance!

EARTH.

LOOK, LOIS, YOU'RE REALLY PUTTIN' ME ON THE SPOT HERE!

KENT WAS A FRIEND OF MINE, TOO, BUT THAT DON'T CHANGE THE FACT HIS PLACE WAS THE SITE OF A *MURDER!* YOU KNOW I CAN'T LET YOU IN!

3D

NO ENTRY! POLICE ORDER

INSPECTOR HENDERSON -- BILL -- IT'S *PERSONAL*, NOT PROFESSIONAL.

PLEASE.

OKAY, OKAY, I'M A SUCKER FOR ROMANCE. YOU GOT FIVE MINUTES -- BUT DON'T *TOUCH* ANYTHING!

SMALLVILLE

ATH'S
OICE
ARK KENT

ZEN
ART OF MI

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

IRVING

4-H FAIR

9

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

DAILY PLANET

EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR CLARK KENT

LOOK, PERRY, I DON'T *CARE* WHAT TYPE OF STORY IT IS OR *WHERE* IT IS...

... JUST GET ME *OUT* OF TOWN!

DAILY PLANET

DON'T CARE ABOUT THE STORY? NOW, THAT DOESN'T SOUND LIKE THE LOIS LANE I'VE KNOWN ALL THESE YEARS! CARE TO LET ME IN ON IT?

I NEED A BREAK -- A CHANGE OF SCENERY -- ROOM TO THINK THINGS OUT.

IT'S CLARK, ISN'T IT? I KNOW YOU WERE CLOSE FRIENDS --

YOU'RE MY *BOSS*, NOT MY *SHRINK*... *PLEASE* DON'T TRY TO ANALYZE ME, PERRY.

NOW, WHAT'S MY ASSIGNMENT?

I'VE GOT JUST THE STORY FOR YOU! GO HOME, PACK YOUR BAGS AND I'LL SEE TO YOUR FLIGHT ARRANGEMENTS!

WHAT EXOTIC LOCALE AM I OFF TO? THE SOVIET UNION? TIBET? EGYPT, PERHAPS?

HOW DOES TRUDEAU, SOUTH DAKOTA STRIKE YOU?

"I'LL GET YOU FOR THIS, CHIEF."

STRANGE. I'VE CIRCLED THE ENTIRE PLANET AND THERE'S NO SIGN OF LIFE.

I COULDN'T HAVE BEEN AWAY FROM THIS PLACE FOR MORE THAN FOUR OR FIVE DAYS.

YET NOW, IT'S DESERTED-- NOT SO MUCH AS AN ANIMAL OR INSECT ON THE ENTIRE PLANET!

AND THAT GUY IN THE SPACE VESSEL WAS DEFINITELY TRYING TO GET *FAR AWAY* FROM HERE TOO!

SOMETHING STRANGE HAS GONE DOWN HERE. ODDLY, THOUGH, THIS CITY IS NOW THE PERFECT PLACE FOR ME.

NO LIVES FOR ME TO TAKE, NO NEED FOR ME TO EVER BECOME JUDGE, JURY OR EXECUTIONER... EVER AGAIN.

A PLACE WHERE A SUPERMAN CAN DO NO HARM.

STILL, THOSE LITTLE GUYS WERE KIND OF CUTE... I CAN'T HELP WONDERING WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM...

'WHERE COULD THEY ALL HAVE GONE?

NOWHERE.

THROUGHOUT THE CITY, THERE IS NO LIFE--ITS PROUD SPIRES EMPTY.

THE ODORS OF LIFE ARE PLENTIFUL. SOMEWHERE NOURISHMENT LONG SINCE BURNED SITS ON A FLAME WAITING TO BE REMOVED.

IN VARIOUS DWELLINGS, UNEATEN DINNERS LIE ROTTING ON TABLES AS THOUGH LEFT IN A GREAT HURRY.

A PERSONAL COMMUNICATION DEVICE BUZZES INCESSANTLY, BEGGING SOMEONE TO ANSWER.

HELLO? IS ANYBODY THERE?

HELLO?

NOTHING.

NO ONE AT THE OTHER END OF THE LINE.

VERY RECENTLY, THIS PROUD COMMUNITY BUSTLED WITH LIFE.

NOW IT IS LIKE A TOMB.

A GRIM, HAUNTING MEMORY BEGINS TO GNAW ITS WAY TO THE SURFACE OF SUPERMAN'S MIND...

AH, GENERAL RIPLEY. I SEE THE PENTAGON SENT ITS TOP P.R. BRASS TO HANDLE THIS MESS. INTERESTING.

WELCOME TO SOUTH DAKOTA, LANE! NOW, HOW ABOUT YOU GET YOUR PERT LITTLE KEESTER IN THE TRUCK AND CAN THE SMART STUFF?

BECAUSE THE LAST TIME WE MET YOU WERE BUILDING UP THE GRENADA INVASION TO LOOK LIKE *THE* MILITARY SUCCESS OF ALL TIME!

SO I EMBELLISH A BIT--IT'S GOOD FOR THE COUNTRY!

IT'S PRECISELY THAT TALENT FOR EMBELLISHING THAT HAS ME CURIOUS.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT, LANE, THIS TIME YOU GET THE ABSOLUTE TRUTH!

NOW, CLIMB IN--YOU'RE GONNA BE THE FIRST CIVILIANS TO SEE TRUDEAU SINCE THE *DISASTER!*

SO WE FINALLY GET TO FIND OUT WHAT KILLED AN ENTIRE TOWN!

YOU'RE ACTING LIKE YOU SMELL A CONSPIRACY, LOIS! WHAT GIVES?

YOU'RE MY COMPETITION, BRADDOCK--

SHUMAKER

--THE ONLY THING I'LL GIVE YOU IS THE CHANCE TO BUY ME A DRINK WHEN I BLOW THE LID OFF RIPLEY'S SECRET!

HMPH--YOU NEVER EASE UP, DO YOU?

NOT ON SOMETHING LIKE THIS!

WHEN IT COMES TO THE U.S. MILITARY YOU CAN'T TAKE ANYTHING AT FACE VALUE!

WELL, WELL, WELL, SO THIS TRAIN WRECK IS THE CAUSE OF TRUDEAU'S PROBLEMS?

QUITE A SIGHT, EH, PEOPLE? HARD TO BELIEVE THIS ONE ACCIDENT WIPED OUT AN ENTIRE TOWN!

FREAK ACCIDENT, REALLY--TRAIN CARRYING CHEMICAL BASE FOR FERTILIZER NAILS A TRUCK HAULING CHLORIC ACID--THE TWO MIX AND TRUDEAU IS *HISTORY!*

WHY WASN'T THE TOWN EVACUATED?

NOT A CHANCE, BOYS! THE CLOUD WAS SO LETHAL IT KILLED ON CONTACT--ISN'T A MAN ALIVE THAT COULD OUT RUN THAT SUCKER!

WHY THE YEAR OF SILENCE, GENERAL?

SECURITY, LANE! HAD TO MAKE SURE THIS WASN'T A TERRORIST ATTACK--

-- UNCLE SAM'S PLANTED A LOT OF *DEFENSE BASES* IN SOUTH DAKOTA!

RIPLEY

A TRAGEDY THAT GOES UNANNOUNCED FOR A YEAR... THE PENTAGON'S MOST *"CAN DO"* GENERAL LEADING THE PARADE...

...A CAN OF ROTTEN *TUNA* SMELLS BETTER THAN THIS CONCOCTION!

HEY, LANE!

CUT THE DAY DREAMS 'N' GETCHER BUTT BACK IN THE TRUCK! WE'RE *MOVIN'* ON!

YES, *SIR*, COLONEL RIPLEY!

HEY GUYS, COVER ME AND THE FIRST ROUND IS ON ME WHEN WE GET BACK TO CIVILIZATION!

IF RIPLEY CATCHES YOU YOU'LL NEVER *SEE* CIVILIZATION AGAIN, LANE!

OKAY, SOLDIER, LET'S HAUL THESE PARASITES OVER TO THE HOSPITAL AND WRAP THIS SHOW UP!

ANY LUCK AND THEY'LL BE TOO SNOWED TO ASK ANY *REAL* QUESTIONS!

REAL QUESTIONS AREN'T THE ISSUE, RIPLEY.

AMOCO

TRUTH IS.

RLIN

MY GOD.

FLAGS... A NUMBER OF PARKED CARS... IT LOOKS AS THOUGH THESE STREETS WERE BURSTING WITH LIFE JUST MINUTES AGO.

YET THIS TOWN...

...AND EVERYONE WHO LIVED HERE...

...IS LONG DEAD.

PHEUM

TRUDEAU MANOR

SO WHY COVER UP THE DEATHS OF 2547 PEOPLE?

OBVIOUSLY THE TRUTH IS DAMAGING.

BRIID'S CAFE

PERHAPS THE MILITARY CAUSED IT-- COULD THE TRAIN HAVE CARRIED NERVE GAS OR OTHER BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS?

BRIO'S

"ARE YOU READY FOR UNION?" AN EFFORT TO UNIONIZE WORKERS...? SOME KIND OF SEXUAL COME ON...?

UOY ERE YOR UNION?

...OR SOMETHING MUCH MORE SIGNIFICANT?

NO TIME TO DWELL ON IT. I HAVE TO KEEP MOVING-- AVOID THE PATROLS.

THE ARMY IS CERTAINLY HERE FOR MORE THAN JUST TO STOP LOOTERS!

NOW, THIS CERTAINLY ADDS TO THE MYSTERY! SOMETHING MUST HAVE EXPLODED OR ERUPTED FROM THIS SEWER! IT HAS TO BE CONNECTED TO THE DISASTER!

AND THIS *SLIME* ON THE RUBBLE-- I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT BEFORE!

OUT OF THE FRYING PAN AND INTO THE FIRE, I GUESS.

WHY CAN'T I EVER FIND AN EASIER WAY TO NAIL DOWN A STORY?

THIS IS LIKE A MYSTERY NOVEL WITH EVERY CHAPTER ADDING TO THE DILEMMA.

ARMY-ISSUED LIGHTS, MOVEMENT DETECTORS AND AIR COMPRESSORS.

IS THE ARMY CLEANING UP LETHAL GAS THAT LEAKED INTO THE SEWER SYSTEM?

OR AM I HOT ON THE TRAIL OF SOMETHING FAR MORE SINISTER?

HMM... THAT PILE OF GRAVEL SURE IS GETTING A LOT OF ATTENTION.

NOT GRAVEL... MORE LIKE GROUND STONE CHIPS AND METAL FLAKES...

CHEMIC
an
ITE
ANALYSI

...OR *BONE!*

BK

TOOTH FILLINGS
BRACE
SURGICAL IMPLANTS

PERSONAL EFFECTS

HUMAN BONE! THIS IS A PILE OF *REMAINS* -- AFTER THE FLESH AND TISSUE WAS STRIPPED FROM THE BODY!

HE'S BEEN HERE.

THE EVIDENCE IS UNMISTAKABLE.

FOOD LEFT UNEATEN, HOMES DESERTED IN HASTE--

--A PLANET DEVOID OF LIFE.

NOW THE MOST DAMNING EVIDENCE OF ALL.

A TRULY HORRID REMINDER OF THE TRUDEAU TRAGEDY.

INORGANIC MATTER.

INDIGESTIBLE DROPPINGS.

REMNANTS OF LIFE.

HFUHRUHURR, THE WORD BRINGER--THE ALIEN BEING WHO TOOK EVERY LIFE ON TRUDEAU HAS DUPLICATED HIS CRIME HERE.

HE ESCAPED EARTH.

AND THIS TIME HE'S HIT AND LEFT NOTHING BEHIND HIM BUT A DEAD PLANET.

MICROSCOPIC VISION CONFIRMS THE SUSPICION.

WITH NO ONE LEFT TO FOLLOW HIM THIS TIME, HFUHRUHURR DIDN'T MASK HIS TRAIL.

AN ENGINE'S ION DISCHARGE LEADS INTO DEEP SPACE.

A LEAD THAT IS EASILY PURSUED.

AMAZING. WHEN I FOLLOWED THE TUNNELS THAT LEAD OUT OF THE SEWER I NEVER DREAMED I'D FIND THIS!

BUT ONE THING SEEMS CERTAIN...

...NOT EVEN LEXCORP BUILDS MACHINERY THIS IMPRESSIVE!

I DOUBT ANYONE ON THIS PLANET COULD!

THE PENTAGON *MUST* BE TRYING TO HIDE AN *ALIEN PRESENCE!*

DAMN IT, LANE, YOU WAS A PAIN IN THE BUTT IN GRENADA AND YOU'RE A PAIN IN THE BUTT TODAY!

UH-OH...

YOU GOT FIVE SECONDS TO HAUL YOUR CHEEKS OUTTA HERE OR I'M GONNA HANG YOU UP ON CHARGES!

LIGHTEN UP, RIPLEY! YOUR MACHO TOUGH-GUY APPROACH MAY WORK ON RECRUITS--

--BUT NOT ME! WHY NOT COME CLEAN WITH THE STORY NOW? I CAN WRITE THE TRUTH OR WILD CONJECTURE-- YOUR CHOICE!

LOOK, I'M NOT AUTHORIZED TO TELL YOU A THING, BUT OFF THE RECORD--

ON THE RECORD OR SAVE YOUR BREATH.

ONLY IF WHITE WAITS FOR MILITARY CLEARANCE!

TWENTY-FOUR HOURS.

OKAY, HERE'S THE SCOOP.

ABOUT A YEAR AGO WE LOST CONTACT WITH TRUDEAU -- EVEN SENT IN INVESTIGATIVE TEAMS WHO DISAPPEARED WITHOUT A TRACE. ULTIMATELY WE CALLED IN SUPERMAN FOR SOME MUSCLE!

HE FOUND THE TOWN *DEAD!* EVERYONE WAS KILLED BY AN ALIEN CALLED THE WORD BRINGER WHO REMOVED THEIR BRAINS AND HOOKED THEM TOGETHER TO FORM A LIVING UNION!

"THE WORD BRINGER DIDN'T STOP AT BRAINS -- HE COMBINED HIS VICTIMS' FLESH INTO SOME WEIRD MONSTER."

"SUPERMAN MANAGED TO KNOCK THE ALIEN OUTTA THE PICTURE, BUT IT GOES DOWN-HILL FROM THERE.

"WITH THEIR BODIES GONE THE PEOPLE OF TRUDEAU DIDN'T WANT TO LIVE SO THEY TOOK CONTROL OF SUPERMAN'S BODY.

"BY THE TIME SUPERMAN CAME TO, HE FOUND THE BRAINS DEAD -- THEIR LIFE FLUIDS DRAINED!

"SOMEHOW THEY USED HIS UNCONSCIOUS BODY TO SHUT DOWN LIFE-SUPPORT!"

"SEEMS THAT TWO THOUSAND MINDS WIRED TOGETHER HAVE SOME REAL BUTT-KICKIN' TELEPATHIC POWERS!

SUPERMAN SPENT MONTHS HUNTING THE GUY. WE FIRED UP OUR TELESCOPES AND SATELLITES TO HELP HIM BUT THE ALIEN WAS LONG GONE!

AND IT WAS ALL SILENCED BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T WANT PEOPLE WORRIED ABOUT A MURDEROUS SUPERMAN.

DIDN'T WANT PEOPLE WORRYING ABOUT ALIENS COMING TO SWIPE THEIR BRAINS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT!

THERE IS NO SOUND.

NO WARMTH

THE ONLY SENSATION IS THAT OF WONDER-MENT AND PURPOSE.

AND FINALLY...

...SHOCK.

GOOD GOD--!

I KNEW I WAS CLOSE BUT I NEVER EXPECTED THIS!

HFUHRUHURR'S SHIP APPEARS ENORMOUS AND I'M STILL MILES AWAY!

BUT WHY DOES A MAN WHO WAS DRIVEN FROM HIS OWN PLANET NEED SOMETHING SO LARGE?

HE *MUST* TRAVEL ALONE YET THIS CRAFT LOOKS LIKE IT COULD CARRY ALL OF METROPOLIS!

THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND OUT.

ONE WAY TO AVENGE THE SOULS OF TRUDEAU.

ONE WAY TO EASE A GUILTY CONSCIENCE.

ATTACK.

MY GOD-- I NEVER DREAMED...

BRAINS.

AS FAR AS EVEN SUPERMAN'S INCREDIBLE VISION CAN SEE, COUNTLESS BRAINS -- REPRESENTING COUNTLESS PLANETS AND INFINITE LIFE FORMS -- FLOAT EERILY IN FLUIDS.

THE UNION IS A REALITY.

THE REALITY IS HORROR.

CONTINUED NEXT WEEK IN ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN #452

HE THOUGHT HE'D SEEN IT ALL.

IN LESS THAN TWENTY-NINE YEARS HE'S SEEN AFRICA'S RELENTLESS FAMINE, FREQUENT NATURAL DISASTERS SCAR THE EARTH, WAR IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND OTHER EXAMPLES OF MAN'S INHUMANITY TO MAN.

ALL THIS WITHOUT RECALLING THE DOZENS OF SUPERNATURAL EVENTS HE'S WITNESSED...

BUT EVEN A MAN BIRTHED IN THE FIERY DESTRUCTION OF AN ENTIRE PLANET... EVEN THIS

G-4517

SUPERMAN®

...HAS NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS...

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HELL BEYOND

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special thanks to JERRY ORDWAY for his plot assist / SUPERMAN created by JERRY SIEGEL and JOE SHUSTER

STRETCHING CLOSE TO A HALF MILE LONG, THE GREAT HALL IS FILLED WITH EERIE INDIVIDUAL CHAMBERS.

FLOATING SILENTLY IN THEIR CHAMBERS, THE BRAINS REPRESENT AN INFINITE NUMBER OF PLANETS AND LIFE FORMS.

IT IS BEYOND COMPREHENSION.

SOME OF THE BRAINS ARE SO LARGE THEY HAVE OBVIOUSLY COME FROM TRULY IMMENSE BEINGS.

OTHERS ARE SO SMALL THEY CAN ONLY BE SEEN WITH HIS MICROSCOPIC VISION.

THERE ARE SEVENTY-TWO HALLS LIKE THIS ABOARD THE SHIP. HFUHRUHURR THE WORD BRINGER HAS BUILT HIS COVETED UNION.

HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF SOULS DEVOID OF BODIES NOW EXIST WITHOUT ANY SENSE OF LIFE.

AN ERRANT NOTION, TRAVELLER. OUR EXISTENCE IS NOW ONE OF A SHARED CONSCIOUSNESS AND KNOWLEDGE.

TELEPATHIC COMMUNICATION, EH? IF YOU KNOW ENGLISH YOU MUST BE FROM EARTH!

AS MY APPEARANCE WOULD INDICATE, YOU ARE MISTAKEN, TRAVELLER.

WE OF THE UNION READ YOUR THOUGHTS... DEFINED YOUR PLANET OF ORIGIN. THE MEMBERS OF THE UNION WHO KNOW YOUR LANGUAGE ENABLE ME TO COMMUNICATE WITH YOU.

THEN THERE ARE PEOPLE... BRAINS... FROM EARTH IN THE UNION?

SEVERAL. SOME FROM YOUR RECENT PAST--ONE FROM THE EARLIEST DAYS OF MAN'S EXISTENCE ON YOUR PLANET!

INCREDIBLE! HOW OLD IS THIS VESSEL, ANYWAY?

UNKNOWN. I HAVE BEEN HERE FOR OVER 8,000 OF YOUR YEARS.

THE STATEMENT IS STAGGERING.

THE TRAGEDY OF TRUDEAU IS NOT UNIQUE.

IT HAS BEEN REPEATED MILLIONS OF TIMES ON THOUSANDS OF PLANETS.

ONCE AND FOR ALL, THE HORROR MUST END.

AH, AN OPPORTUNITY I'D THOUGHT LONG LOST IS NOW PRESENTED -- THE CHANCE TO ACQUIRE A KRYPTONIAN BRAIN!

HOW FORTUNATE YOU WISH TO JOIN THE *UNION*!

YOU'RE HERE!

I AM HFUHRUHURR THE *WORD BRINGER!*

I BRING THE WORD TO THE UNEN-LIGHTENED.

SAVE IT, MISTER! YOUR "*WORD*"-- YOUR "*UNION*"-- IS JUST ANOTHER WORD FOR MURDER IN MY BOOK!

YOU MAY HAVE ESCAPED ME BEFORE, BUT NOW--

BEFORE?

THEN WE HAVE ENCOUNTERED EACH OTHER IN THE PAST?

YOU FILTHY--! YOU REALLY DON'T REMEMBER?

YOU DON'T REMEMBER EARTH --TRUDEAU-- AND THE 2,500 LIVES YOU DESTROYED?

I *DESTROY* NOTHING, KRYPTONIAN.

I *GRANT* LIFE ETERNAL THROUGH THE UNION.

PREPARE YOURSELF.

YOU ARE TO BECOME PART OF THE UNION.

NEVER!

AH, YOUR BRASH BEHAVIOR ALLOWS ME TO RECALL OUR EARLIER CONFRONTATION, SUPERMAN.

YOU SHOULD KNOW WELL BY NOW...

...THAT I WILL ALLOW NO PHYSICAL ATTACKS ON MY PERSON!

AARGH!

YOU HAD FORGOTTEN MY TELEKINETIC POWERS? MY ABILITY TO STOP YOUR HEART OR BOIL YOUR BLOOD?

FEEL THE INCREASING WARMTH IN YOUR LIMBS...THE AGONIZING PAIN IN YOUR CHEST AS YOUR HEART SCREAMS WHILE THE BLOOD HEATS!

WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE THE FINAL EFFECT WILL BE AS YOUR BLOOD REACHES 200 DEGREES FAHRENHEIT?

WILL YOU JOIN THE UNION?

YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN DEAL IN HEAT, BUDDY!

YAHH! IS THIS SORCERY?

MY HEAT VISION COULD CUT YOU IN TWO!

AND I... CAN'T AFFORD TO... BE PUSHED...

THOUGH HFUHRUHURR DOES NOT RESPOND...

...THE UNION DOES!

A SINGLE POWERFUL MIND BLAST TEARS THROUGH HIS MIND LIKE A SEARING KNIFE.

THE ROOM SPINS...

...HIS LEGS TURN TO JELLY...

...AND CONSCIOUSNESS IS LOST.

EARTH...U.S.A...METROPOLIS...

FOR CRYING OUT LOUD, LOIS, ARE YOU TRYING TO GIVE ME ULCERS HERE?

THE *PRESIDENT-ELECT* HIMSELF CALLED TO COMPLAIN ABOUT YOU WALKING ALL OVER NATIONAL SECURITY!

PERRY, IF YOU'LL LET ME EXPLAIN...

LISTEN, LANE, THE PLANET APPRECIATES YOUR TENACITY...BUT WE *CAN'T* RUN A STORY SAYING SUPERMAN PULLED THE PLUG ON 2,547 PEOPLE FROM TRUDEAU!

THE GUY ISN'T EVEN AROUND TO COMMENT...

...AND THERE ARE NO WITNESSES OR EVIDENCE TO BACK UP THE ARMY'S ALLEGATIONS!

PERRY, MY SOURCE IS SOLID!

Welcome to TRUDI

You'll like it

PHONE

GENERAL RIPLEY HANDS OUT MORE BULL ROAR THAN ANY MAN IN GOVERNMENT, LOIS!

UNTIL YOU GIVE ME PHYSICAL EVIDENCE--OR SUPERMAN IN THE FLESH--THE STORY STAYS BURIED!

NOW, GET BACK HERE--THERE ARE PLENTY OF PRINTABLE STORIES FOR YOU TO TRACK DOWN!

ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT, I'LL BE IN THE OFFICE TOMORROW MORNING!

SEE YOU THEN, CHIEF!

SUPERMAN'S BEEN MISSING FOR WEEKS--HOW WILL *I* EVER FIND HIM?

PHONE

BESIDES JIMMY OLSEN, THE ONLY PERSON WHO EVER KNEW HOW TO GET HOLD OF SUPERMAN WAS CLARK AND HE'S--

NO... I'VE GOT TO *STOP* THINKING ABOUT HIM.

GOT TO KEEP MY MIND ON WORK...

...LUNCH WITH THE BOARD AT 1:00...

...SOUTH AFRICAN GOLD SHIPMENT ARRIVES TONIGHT, LEX!

THE GOVERNOR IS HOLDING FOR YOU ON LINE THREE, MR. L!

NO!

NO!

NO!

I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ANY OF IT! I PAY YOU ALL GOOD MONEY TO TAKE CARE OF MUNDANE DETAILS -- *NOW DO SO!*

PRIVATE

AS FOR THE REST OF THE DAY, NO MATTER WHO CALLS, NO MATTER WHAT COMES UP...

...I *AM* OUT!

WITH SUPERMAN MISSING, THE SHEER REDUNDANCY OF MY LIFE IS ALMOST UNBEARABLE!

I ALWAYS WANTED HIM OFF MY BACK, BUT LIKE A RETIRED ATHLETE MISSING THE APPLAUSE... THE COMBAT...

I *NEED* MY ENEMY!

LIVE

WITH THE MAN OF STEEL GONE, WHAT COMES NEXT?

I'VE CONQUERED METROPOLIS SEVERAL TIMES OVER. THE CITY IS VIRTUALLY *MINE* COMPLETELY!

YET I CRAVE A NEW CHALLENGE.... A NEW ACQUISITION! AND ONCE I FIND IT...

...I'LL TAKE IT BY FORCE IF NECESSARY!

STAR

FEAST YOUR EYES ON THIS, KIDDO! THE BADDEST, FASTEST, MEANEST MACHINE EVER BUILT FOR A SIX YEAR OLD, AND IT'S ALL YOURS!

OH, MORGAN, ISN'T THIS A LITTLE TOO EXTRAVAGANT?

HEY, DON'T SWEAT IT, BABE! IF MORGAN EDGE CAN'T TREAT HIS MAIN LADY'S KID, WHO CAN HE TREAT?

WOW! WAIT'LL MY FRIEND CALVIN SEES THIS! ALL HE HAS IS A DUMB OLD STUFFED TIGER!

NOW, ADAM, WHAT DO YOU SAY WHEN YOU'RE GIVEN A PRESENT?

THANKS A LOT, MR. EDGE! CAN I DRIVE IT, NOW?

SURE THING, KIDDO. JUST DON'T BREAK THE SOUND BARRIER, OKAY?

ADAM

HE'S A GOOD KID, CAT. ALWAYS HARD PICTURING A LOOKER LIKE YOU BEING A MOTHER, THOUGH!

IT CERTAINLY HASN'T BEEN EASY. HIS FATHER--

--OH, LET'S NOT WASTE OUR TIME TOGETHER TALKING ABOUT MY EX... OR *ANYONE* ELSE.

I'LL GO ALONG WITH THAT, BABE! GIVE THE LADY A DRINK, WASHINGTON!

HOW DO YOU MANAGE TO ANTICIPATE MY EVERY DESIRE?

IN MY BUSINESS, YOU'VE GOTTA ANTICIPATE EVERY-THING... IF YOU WANNA STAY ON TOP!

GALAXY BROAD-CASTING KEEPS YOU THAT BUSY?

THERE'S MORE TO ME THAN *G.B.S.*, BABE!

REALLY? TELL ME ABOUT IT!

THE SIGHT IS NOTHING LESS THAN AWESOME.

FOR OVER TWO HOURS HE'S SCOURED THE SHIP FOR THE WORD BRINGER.

USING SUPER SPEED IT WOULD STILL TAKE MANY MORE HOURS TO COVER THE ENTIRE SHIP. AND THE SOPHISTI-CATED MACHINERY OFTEN BLOCKS HIS X-RAY VISION.

FOUR AIRCRAFT CARRIERS AND THEIR ACCOMPANYING ESCORT SHIPS WOULD FILL ONLY A SMALL SECTION OF THE JUGGERNAUT.

YET GRIM DETERMINATION PUSHES HIM ON, UNTIL...

BINGO!

THE MEMORY OF TRUDEAU DRIVES HIM HARDER THAN EVER.

THE TIME HAS COME FOR A CRIME TO BE ATONED FOR.

HELFERFER, OR WHATEVER YOUR NAME IS, YOUR NUMBER IS UP!

AH, HOW FORTUNATE.

YOU HAVE ARRIVED IN TIME TO WITNESS THE BLESSED EVENT, KRYPTONIAN.

THE ONLY THING I INTEND TO WITNESS HERE IS YOUR DOWN-FALL, MISTER!

CURIOUS. WHY DON'T YOU ACCEPT THE UNION FOR THE BLESSED AND WONDROUS THING IT IS?

STILL PUSHING THAT PSEUDO RELIGIOUS BUNK, HUH? WELL, TO ME, IT'S NOTHING BUT A COVER FOR MURDER!

I DO NOT MURDER. ALL CREATURES ARE FATED TO DIE FROM THE MOMENT OF BIRTH.

I GRANT ETERNAL LIFE. TO EXIST IN THE UNION IS TO BE GRANTED ACCESS TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF ALL-- THE SECRETS TO OUR INFINITE UNIVERSE!

IF YOU DOUBT ME, WITNESS THIS!

WHAT THE--?

FLASHING LIGHTS AND GLITZY SPECIAL EFFECTS DON'T IMPRESS ME!

WILL YOU STILL CALL ME MURDERER, SUPERMAN?

ONCE YOU WITNESS THIS YOU WILL ABANDON THAT SLANDEROUS TERM AND CALL ME THE *CREATOR* OF *LIFE!*

IMAGINE THE NUMBER OF DIFFERENT LIFE FORMS REPRESENTED IN THIS VESSEL AND CONSIDER THEIR MIGHT IF COMBINED INTO ONE BEING.

I GIVE YOU THAT BEING NOW--I GIVE YOU THE *UNION PERSONIFIED!*

WE ARE EON.

YOU WILL UNHAND THE WORD BRINGER OR YOU WILL ANSWER TO *US!*

NO--! HE'S DELUDING YOU ALL... HE'S--

IT IS NOT FOR *YOU* TO JUDGE!!

YES! THE UNION DETERMINES ITS OWN FATE!

OUR POWERS ARE DERIVED FROM OUR INFINITE KNOWLEDGE.

MANY MEMBERS OF THE UNION ARE ENERGY-BASED CREATURES.

SKTOW

EON IS A LIVING CONDUIT, THROUGH WHICH THE UNION'S ENERGY CAN FLOW.

WHILE EON DOES NOT CARRY THE CONSCIOUS THOUGHTS OF EVERY MEMBER OF THE UNION, HE CAN ACCESS THEIR KNOWLEDGE -- THEIR EVERY MEMORY.

THOUGH HIS TISSUE IS SYNTHETIC, HE LIVES AS THE HOLY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNION.

YOUR BOY MIGHT HAVE THE SMARTS AND THE POWER--

--BUT I'LL WAGER HE DOESN'T HAVE THE *SKILL* TO STOP ME FROM DOING WHAT I *MUST* TO HELP THEM.

WE HAVE SEEN YOUR HEAT VISION AND CAN ALTER OUR CHEMICAL COMPOSITION TO WARD OFF ITS EFFECTS.

AS FOR BEATING YOU--

--THE UNION WILL BE PROTECTED.

YOUR THREATS WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.

BRAKAMM

YOU'VE GOT IT ALL WRONG, FRIEND! I DON'T THREATEN YOUR UNION--

--JUST YOUR EMERALD BUDDY AND HIS MURDEROUS IDEAS!

AND IT SOUNDS TO ME LIKE HE'S LITERALLY *BRAIN-WASHED* YOU ALL TO HIS WAY OF THINKING.

THE WORD BRINGER MUST ANSWER FOR WHAT HE'S DONE TO *TRUDEAU!* FOR WHAT HE'S DONE TO YOU *ALL!*

HE *WILL* ANSWER IN THE END... WE ALL DO... BUT FOR THE *MOMENT* HE HAS GIVEN US EON...

NOW WE EMBODY THE POWER OF UNION ...CAN ALTER OUR COMPOSITION ...OUR BEING...

...OUR *POWER!* WE ARE INVINCIBLE-- AND WE CAN MAKE UP OUR OWN MINDS!

THE MAN OF STEEL'S LIFE-SUPPORT BELT PROVIDES A QUICK HIT OF DESPERATELY NEEDED OXYGEN.

BUT IN THE NEXT INSTANT HE WONDERS IF HE WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN BETTER OFF UNCONSCIOUS...

YOUR STARTLED EXPRESSION SURPRISES US, SUPERMAN.

WE TOLD YOU EARLIER THAT WE ARE FORGED OF ENERGY--THAT WE COMMAND ENERGY.

THE FORM OF ENERGY IS DISCRETIONARY.

IT FLUCTUATES -- ASSUMES ANY FORM WE CHOOSE.

OUR HUMANOID APPEARANCE WAS CHOSEN MERELY BECAUSE IT REPLICATES THAT OF THE WORD BRINGER.

HFUHRUHURR'S REALLY DONE A NUMBER ON THESE GUYS...

AND HE WILL DO HIS "NUMBER" ON YOU AS WELL!

MY THOUGHTS --! HE'S READING MY MIND!

YOU CANNOT RESIST! THE TIME HAS COME FOR YOU TO JOIN US IN UNION.

LET YOUR BODY ACCEPT DEATH WHILE YOUR MIND LINKS WITH THE INFINITE COSMOS.

PAIN --! SO INTENSE... MY MIND SHUTTING DOWN....!

NO! YOU WILL NOT BLACK ME OUT LIKE THE *LAST TIME!*

DON'T ANY OF YOU REMEMBER WHAT LIFE WAS LIKE BEFORE THE WORD BRINGER *MURDERED* YOU?

HAVE YOU ALL *FORGOTTEN* YOUR PAIN WHEN HE FORCED HIS WILL UPON YOU?

HOW MANY OF YOU JOINED THE UNION *WILLINGLY?*

HOW MANY OF YOU *DIED* AT HIS HAND ONLY TO SERVE HIM NOW AS HIS PERVERSE *ACCOMPLICE?*

YOU MUST *THINK FOR YOURSELVES!*

YOU SEEK TO MORALIZE.

MORALITY IS DEFINED BY CIRCUMSTANCE.

THE CIRCUMSTANCE: THE UNION EXISTS AND WE ACCEPT IT.

JOIN US.

SKASH

BRAMM

SKRAKT

CRAKT

BRAKASSH

THERE IS A SUDDEN EXPLOSION OF GLASS AND LIQUID AS THE MAN OF STEEL BURSTS INTO HFUHRUHURR'S HALL OF BRAINS--

--AND FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ITS EXISTENCE, THE UNION FEELS PAIN.

DESPITE THE IMMEDIATE PERSONAL DANGER THREATENING HIM, SUPERMAN'S CONCERNS ARE SHIFTED...

A SENTIENT LIFE IS JEOPARDIZED, AND HIS HUMAN UPBRINGING DEMANDS HE ACT.

THE BRAINS BACK IN TRUDEAU, DIED AS SOON AS THEIR LIFE FLUIDS WERE DRAINED...

THIS ONE IS WITHERING -- GOING FAST.

THE SHATTERED GLASS FROM ITS TANK SHOULD SOLVE ONE PART OF THIS PROBLEM--

--WHILE CAREFULLY CONTROLLED BURSTS OF *HEAT-VISION* PROVIDE THE REST.

MORE TIME PASSES BEFORE THE GLOBE IS FILLED.

BUT, DESPITE HIS HEROIC EFFORTS...

...THE BRAIN IS DYING.

A VIOLENT DEATH SCREAM ECHOES TELE-PATHICALLY THROUGH SUPERMAN'S MIND.

IMAGES OF AN IMMENSE PLANET WITH GREAT, PONDEROUS CREATURES FLASH AND FADE.

AND THEN...

...DEATH.

ANOTHER PRECIOUS LIFE IS GONE.

You seek the Union's destruction, traveller, yet you tried to save one of us.

Why?

LIFE IS TO BE VALUED NO MATTER WHAT FORM IT MIGHT TAKE! AND WHILE YOUR UNION *IS* VALID -- THE WORD BRING-ER'S METHODS ARE *NOT!*

If you consider us valid, why did you prevent us from supplementing our numbers on earth?

THEY WEREN'T *ASKED!*

YOU JUST *ASSUMED* THEY WANTED TO JOIN!

YOU'VE BEEN SEPARATED FROM YOUR BODIES FOR SO LONG THAT YOU'VE BECOME ARROGANT -- FORGOTTEN THE VALUE OF *INDIVID-UAL LIFE!*

YOUR EARTHLY "*SUPPLEMENTS*" WERE SO DISTRAUGHT THEY TOOK CONTROL OF MY MIND AND FORCED ME TO KILL THEM!

You are mistaken. While the earth brains did indeed take control of your mind...

...they only did it to subdue you. They used TELEKINESIS to drain their fluids while you were unconscious.

THE WORDS SINK IN SLOWLY WHILE MONTHS OF GUILT BEGIN TO EVAPORATE. THE VERDICT:

INNOCENT.

AT LAST, WE HAVE FOUND YOU, KRYPTONIAN.

DEAL WITH HIM, EON -- ONE FINAL TIME.

NO, HFUHRUHURR, ENOUGH IS *ENOUGH!*

WE WILL DECIDE WHEN WE'VE HAD--

OH, SHUT UP ALREADY!

SPLASH

NO... YOU CANNOT--

THWAKK

WE'VE DONE THIS DANCE BEFORE AND IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO SIT ONE OUT, EON!

ONE OF YOUR OWN IS *DEAD* AND YOU DON'T EVEN CARE.

YOUR UNION...

...IS A *SHAM.*

YOU THINK OUR MIGHT RESTS ONLY WITH EON?

HE IS BUT A VESSEL FOR THE UNION'S POWER-- A POWER I ALSO COMMAND!

KILL THE KRYPTONIAN, MY UNION--KILL HIM!

THIS TIME THERE IS NO PSYCHIC BLAST. THE UNION IS SILENT.

THE REQUEST FOR DEATH IS IGNORED.

THEY'RE FINALLY ON TO YOU, AREN'T THEY?

NO...

'THEY'VE LIVED FOR SO LONG IN YOUR STINKING TANKS THEY'D FORGOTTEN THE VALUE OF LIFE...

...UNTIL ONE OF THEM DIED.

AND NOW... JUSTICE?

THOUGH A MASS MURDERER, THERE ARE NO COURTS FOR HFUHRUHURR TO ANSWER TO.

NO JUDGE OR JURY TO PASS SENTENCE.

MEMORIES OF A SIMILAR SITUATION HAUNT HIM.

HE IS FROZEN WITH INDECISION.

FEELING IN HIS HEART THAT ONLY ONE THING CAN TRULY STOP AN EVIL LIKE THE WORD BRINGER.

DEATH.

Superman.

Naturally we are reading your thoughts and we believe we can help solve your dilemma.

IN CASE YOU HADN'T NOTICED, YOU'RE A BIG PART OF MY DILEMMA!

Think of the Union as the most complete library ever created--a bank of incredible historical knowledge that can travel the universe collecting more.

your display of humanity and plea for willing participants has not gone unnoticed

HOW SO?

In the past we allowed Hfyhruhurr to guide us. But now we have a physical presence--a way to CONTROL the Word Bringer.

We will live through EON. Through him we will prevent the heinous practices of the past.

The Union will only take those who are near death and who join us willingly.

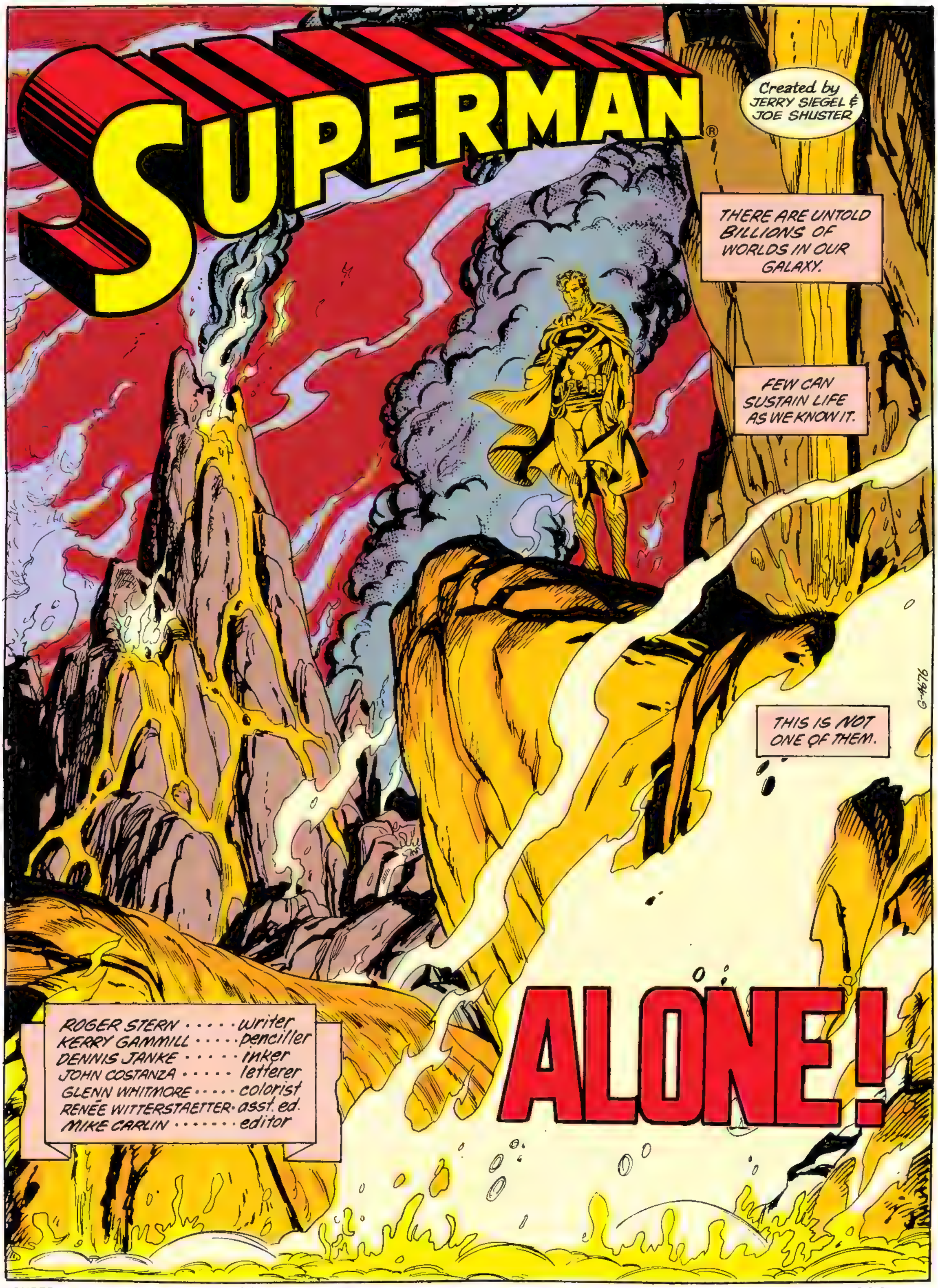
Will you trust us?

THERE AREN'T A WHOLE LOT OF OTHER CHOICES...

...YOU'VE GOT A SHOT.

SCREW IT UP AND I'LL BE BACK.

END


SUPERMAN®
Created by JERRY SIEGEL & JOE SHUSTER
THERE ARE UNTOLD BILLIONS OF WORLDS IN OUR GALAXY.
FEW CAN SUSTAIN LIFE AS WE KNOW IT.
THIS IS NOT ONE OF THEM.
ROGER STERN ..... writer
KERRY GAMMILL ..... penciller
DENNIS JANKE ..... inker
JOHN COSTANZA ..... letterer
GLENN WHITMORE ..... colorist
RENÉE WITTERSTAETTER ... asst. ed.
MIKE CARLIN ..... editor
ALONE!

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THIS ENTIRE PLANET SEEMS TO BE ONE MONSTROUS VOLCANIC SYSTEM. HALF THE SURFACE IS *MOLTEN.*

NO WATER, NO LIFE... AND THE ATMOSPHERE STINKS OF *SULFUR.*

MAYBE A WORLD LIKE THIS IS THE HELL I DESERVE FOR KILLING THOSE THREE *SUPER-CRIMINALS.**

*In the controversial issue #22

THEY HAD *EXTERMINATED* FIVE BILLION BEINGS -- THEY THREATENED TO DO THE SAME ON EARTH! I *HAD* TO *STOP* THEM! BUT I KEEP SEEING THEM... *DYING.*

MAYBE I BELONG--

--*HERE?!*

NO! I MAY HAVE EARNED MY *GUILT,* BUT THERE'S NO SENSE IN LETTING THIS PLANET SLOWLY KILL ME.

THAT'S THE EASY WAY OUT.

I'LL FIND ANOTHER WORLD... SOMEWHERE I WON'T BE A DANGER TO OTHER PEOPLE.

I'D BEST NOT ACTIVATE THIS *TELEPORTER* TOO CLOSE TO THE PLANET'S GRAVITY WELL... IT'S UNPREDICTABLE ENOUGH AS IS. ANOTHER HUNDRED MILES AND IT SHOULD BE SAFE TO--

-- MAKE THE JUMP TO *HYPERSPACE!*

IMAGINE A SUDDEN FALL FROM HUNDREDS OF FEET IN THE AIR.

NOW MAGNIFY THAT GUT-WRENCHING FEELING A THOUSANDFOLD.

BEING THROWN THROUGH HYPERSPACE IS WORSE.

EVEN FOR A BEING AS MIGHTY AS SUPERMAN, IT IS A HUMBLING EXPERIENCE.

-; UHNGH! ; WELL... AT LEAST I HAVEN'T *THROWN UP* THE LAST COUPLE OF JUMPS.

OF COURSE, I HAVEN'T *EATEN* IN NEARLY A *WEEK*... I THINK.

IT'S SO EASY TO LOSE TRACK OF TIME OUT HERE. WONDER WHERE I AM *NOW*?

AHH! I MUST BE GETTING A BETTER FEEL FOR ADJUSTING THE TELEPORTER -- I'M FAR ENOUGH AWAY TO KEEP FROM FALLING TOWARD THAT PLANET AT BREAKNECK SPEED--

--BUT NOT SO FAR THAT IT'LL TAKE FOREVER TO FLY THERE.

EVEN FROM HERE, IT LOOKS A LOT BETTER THAN "VOLCANOLAND."

A MORE EARTHLIKE ATMOSPHERE, TOO... ENOUGH OXYGEN...

... AND WHAT HAVE WE *HERE?*

GRAIN?! GOOD LORD, YES! IT'S A *PRAIRIE*... THE BIGGEST I'VE EVER SEEN!

IT'S ALMOST TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE! NO SIGNS OF ANY CIVILIZATION...

... JUST A BIG OL' PLAIN, STRETCHING OUT AS FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE.

THIS IS JUST WHAT I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR. I ALMOST FEEL AS IF I'VE COME HOME.

IF NOT FOR THE *TWO MOONS* IN THE SKY, THIS COULD ALMOST BE...

"... THE FIELDS OUTSIDE OF SMALLVILLE, BACK ON EARTH."

THE NIGHT IS UNSEASONABLY WARM, BUT EVEN IF IT WERE FREEZING, SHE WOULD SCARCELY NOTICE...

... SHE WAS CREATED IN A LABORATORY, MADE OF MALLEABLE PROTOMATTER BY A SCIENTIST NOW AS LIFELESS AS HIS WORLD.

SHE CALLS HERSELF MATRIX.

HER ONLY MEMORIES ARE VAGUE REMEMBRANCES COPIED FROM A WOMAN LONG DEAD. HER POWERS AND ABILITIES ARE FAR BEYOND THOSE OF HUMAN BEINGS. BUT HUMAN IS WHAT SHE YEARNS TO BE...

...WHAT SHE IS TRYING TO LEARN TO BE UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF THE KINDLY OLD COUPLE WHO LIVE HERE.

FORTUNATELY, THEY HAVE HAD EXPERIENCE IN BRINGING UP SUPER-BEINGS...

JONATHAN? ARE YOU *STILL* AWAKE?

'FRAID SO, MARTHA. JUST CAN'T *SLEEP*.

I HAVEN'T SLEPT WELL LATELY MYSELF... KNOWING THAT OUR BOY IS OFF IN SPACE... GOD KNOWS WHERE!

I WISH HE HADN'T LEFT... I WISH HE'D STAYED HERE AND LET US HELP HIM WORK OUT HIS GUILT.

I CAN IMAGINE HOW HE FEELS... I STILL REMEMBER THE *WAR* AS IF IT WERE YESTERDAY. ALL THE ENEMY *DEAD*.. I *KNOW* SOME OF THEM DIED AT MY HANDS.

MAYBE IF I'D TALKED TO CLARK MORE ABOUT THE WAR WHEN HE WAS GROWING UP... MAYBE HE'D HAVE BEEN BETTER *PREPARED*--!

YOU *HUSH* NOW, JONATHAN KENT! NO ONE COULD'VE BEEN A BETTER FATHER THAN YOU!

WE RAISED A *FINE* YOUNG MAN... A *SUPERMAN*. WE HAVE TO TRUST IN HIS JUDGMENT.

I SUPPOSE YOU'RE RIGHT.

CLARK PROMISED THAT HE'D COME BACK TO US... AND I HAVE FAITH THAT HE WILL! HE'S NEVER LET US DOWN YET.

COME ON, NOW... IT'S TIME ALL IN THIS HOUSE WERE ABED AND ASLEEP.

THEY BOTH LOVE THE ONE CALLED CLARK SO MUCH...

THIS ROOM WHERE SHE STAYS... IT WAS HIS ROOM.

SMALLVILLE

SHE HAS HELD AND EXAMINED THE MEMENTOS OF HIS YOUTH--READ THE BOOKS HE READ AS A BOY--AND STILL SHE WONDERS...

... WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE CLARK KENT?

IN LITTLE MORE THAN A FEW HOURS, THIS WORLD SEES ITS FIRST MAN-MADE STRUCTURE...FORMED BY HAND FROM THE NATIVE EARTH...

... AND FIRED ROCK-HARD BY ITS BUILDER'S HEAT VISION!

THE LOCAL CLAY MAKES A FINE *ADOBE*...

... EVEN IF I DID HAVE TO DIG DOWN A COUPLE OF FEET TO GET IT! I'VE NEVER SEEN SUCH TOPSOIL!

WHO WAS IT-- *WILL ROGERS*?-- WHO CLAIMED HE'D SEEN SOIL GOOD ENOUGH TO EAT WITHOUT RUNNING THE VEGETABLES THROUGH IT FIRST? I'M TEMPTED TO TRY A HANDFUL OF *THIS* MYSELF!

I'M NOT SURE HOW IT GOT THIS WAY... THE PLANET DOESN'T APPEAR TO HAVE *ANY* ANIMAL LIFE... AND NOT TOO MANY VARIETIES OF PLANT LIFE.

THIS PRAIRIE GRASS, THOUGH, LOOKS ABOUT THE SAME AS TERRESTRIAL *WHEAT*. DOESN'T *TASTE* HALF BAD, EITHER.

I THINK THIS'LL BE MY MAIN CROP.

I SPENT A LOT OF TIME BEHIND THE WHEEL OF PA'S TRACTOR AS A BOY, PLOWING THE SOUTH 40. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A LOT EASIER IF I COULD HAVE DONE IT *THIS WAY*--

--BUT MY POWERS WEREN'T FULLY DEVELOPED THEN. JUST AS WELL, REALLY...

... IF SOMEONE HAD SPOTTED YOUNG CLARK KENT FLYING ALONG THE FIELDS, PLOWING WITH HIS *BARE HANDS*, MA AND PA WOULD HAVE HAD 'WAY TOO MANY QUESTIONS TO ANSWER.

THE NEXT FEW DAYS ARE SPENT IN GETTING BACK TO THE LAND, AS THE MAN OF STEEL TENDS TO HIS NEW HOMESTEAD...

HE TRAVELS THOUSANDS OF MILES, SEEKING OUT THE PROPER PLANTS WITH HIS TELESCOPIC VISION...

... GATHERING THE SEED AND PLANTING HIS CROP.

WITH HIS OWN TWO HANDS, HE CHANGES THE COURSE OF A RIVER TO IRRIGATE HIS FIELDS.

FOR AN OLD KANSAS FARM BOY, THERE IS GREAT SATISFACTION IN SEEING THE FRUITS OF HIS LABOR SLOWLY START TO TAKE HOLD IN THIS FOREIGN LAND.

BUT AT NIGHT THE LONELINESS TAKES HOLD, AND THERE IS NO SATISFACTION... ONLY SORROW.

ONE WEEK LATER...

NOT MUCH TO DO SINCE THE FIELDS WERE SOWN... THE NATIVE GRAINS GROW *FAST*, THOUGH... PROBABLY BE ABLE TO HARVEST WITHIN A MONTH.

THEN WHAT?

MMPH... THIS PORRIDGE I'VE CONCOCTED IS FILLING, BUT BLAND. I MISS MILK AND BUTTER... HAVE TO GIVE SOME THOUGHT TO FINDING SUBSTITUTES.

MAYBE TOMORROW I'LL LOOK FOR SOME TUBERS... OR SOME BERRIES.

BUT THAT NIGHT, AS SUPERMAN LIES SLEEPING...

HRRM? MA... PA! GET TO THE STORM CELLAR... A TWISTER'S COMING!

A... TWISTER?!?

NO WONDER I DREAMT ABOUT TORNADOES! WHERE DID *THIS* BLOW IN FROM?

GOT TO GRAB WHAT I CAN, *WHILE* I CAN! THIS PLACE IS COMING APART AT THE *SEAMS*!

UNBELIEVABLE! I'VE FLOWN THROUGH *MONSOONS*, BUT I HAVE *NEVER* SEEN RAIN LIKE *THIS* BEFORE!

IT'S AS IF THE SKY OPENED UP AND DUMPED AN *OCEAN* ON THE LAND!

THIS PRAIRIE IS NEARLY THE SIZE OF AUSTRALIA AND IT'S *DROWNING*!

AND THE WATER'S *STILL* RISING! NOW I KNOW HOW *NOAH* FELT!

I WON'T LET IT WASH *ME* AWAY... I *WON'T*! AS LONG AS THERE'S ONE BIT OF LAND ABOVE WATER, I'M STAYING! THIS LAND IS *MINE*!

I'LL WAIT THIS OUT... IF IT'S THE LAST THING... I DO...

UHN? MORNING ALREADY? WHAT--?

NO...IT CAN'T BE...

GONE! WATER, PRAIRIE, EVERYTHING... ALL GONE... ALMOST DOWN TO THE CLAY!

PEERING BENEATH THE GROUND WITH HIS X-RAY VISION...

FROM THE LOOK OF THE SUBSTRATA, THIS HAS HAPPENED *BEFORE*... THE REMNANTS OF *FERTILE CYCLES* ARE INTERSPERSED WITH LAYERS OF SAND AND CLAY.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND THIS WORLD'S ECOSYSTEM... BUT I CAN SEE THAT ANY ATTEMPT TO FARM THIS LAND WOULD BE *FUTILE*.

IT LOOKED SO BEAUTIFUL-- SO *PERFECT!*

IT *WAS* TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE!

I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THAT...*EH?*

A METEOR STORM?! NOW I'M GETTING HIT BY A *METEOR STORM?!?*

NO!

NO MORE!

NO MORE!!

HAPPY WITH YOURSELF, BIG MAN? YOU JUST BROKE UP A BUNCH OF ROCKS THAT HAPPENED TO GET IN YOUR WAY.

I HAD MORE TO GET OUT OF MY SYSTEM THAN I REALIZED.

I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN TRUST MYSELF AROUND PEOPLE ANYMORE, BUT I'M NOT CUT OUT TO BE A HERMIT, EITHER.

MY KRYPTONIAN ANCESTORS LIVED IN ALMOST TOTAL SOLITUDE... I CAN'T FOR THE LIFE OF ME SEE HOW THEY STOOD IT. GUESS I'M JUST TOO HUMAN.

IF I'M EVER TO COME TO TERMS WITH WHAT I'VE DONE--

--I HAVE TO FIND SOME MIDDLE GROUND.

IN THE VACUUM OF SPACE, THERE IS NO SOUND.

HE CANNOT HEAR WHAT WOULD HAVE BEEN THE TELLTALE WHISPER OF LEAKING AIR.

HE WILL NOT KNOW THAT HIS FRAGILE LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEM HAS BEEN DAMAGED...

... UNTIL IT IS FAR TOO LATE.

NEXT WEEK IN

THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN

#453... THE MAN OF STEEL IS DOWN TO HIS LAST BREATH! WILL HE SURVIVE? HERE'S A CLUE...

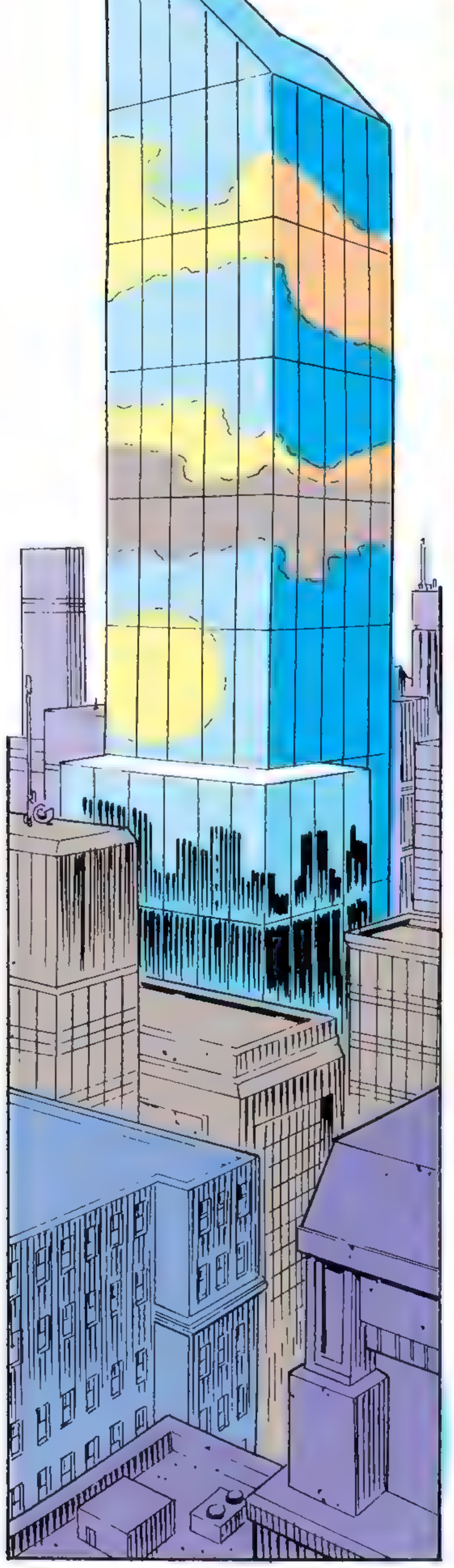
NEXT MONTH IN

SUPERMAN

#31... LEX LUTHOR TAKES OVER THE WHOLE BOOK! (NO LIE.)

NO ONE WOULD EVER MISTAKE IT FOR AN ORDINARY BUILDING.

ALL GLASS AND STEEL AND MONEY AND POWER, IT DOMINATES THE WORLD OF COMMERCE AND FINANCE, JUST AS IT DOMINATES THE SKYLINE OF METROPOLIS.



ITS PENTHOUSE OFFICES HOUSE BOTH THE NERVE CENTER OF A VAST CORPORATE EMPIRE... AND ITS EMPEROR!

HIS NAME IS LEX LUTHOR.

KING

OF ALL HE SURVEYS!

IT'S GOOD TO BE THE KING.

ROGER STERN - WRITER
DAN JURGENS & DENNIS JANKE - ARTISTS
ALBERT DE GUZMAN - LETTERER
GLENN WHITMORE - COLORIST
* WITH THANKS TO JERRY ORDWAY

G-4679

YOU'RE A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN, *METROPOLIS*... AND ONCE AGAIN, YOU'RE ALL *MINE*!

JUST AS YOU WERE BEFORE... JUST AS YOU ALWAYS SHOULD HAVE BEEN -- ALWAYS *WOULD* HAVE BEEN -- IF NOT FOR *SUPERMAN*!

SUPERMAN... I WAS THE POWER IN THIS CITY UNTIL HE CAME ALONG. I DIDN'T BELIEVE ANYTHING COULD CHANGE THAT...

"... NOT EVEN AFTER I'D SEEN HIM IN ACTION. I PURPOSELY HELD MY SECURITY TEAM BACK WHEN TERRORISTS HIJACKED MY YACHT--

"-- TO SEE HOW HE WOULD HANDLE THEM. I WAS QUITE SATISFIED BY THAT LITTLE 'AUDITION'...

"...BUT HE REFUSED TO ACCEPT MY RETAINER!

AND THEN MAYOR BERKOWITZ DEPUTIZED THE SELF-RIGHTEOUS FOOL... HAD HIM ARREST ME FOR RECKLESS ENDANGERMENT...

...ARREST *ME*... AS IF I WERE SOME COMMON *CRIMINAL*!!

THAT WAS THE *TURNING POINT*, WASN'T IT?

FROM THAT MOMENT ON, I PLEDGED MY LIFE TO ENGINEERING THE COMPLETE AND UTTER *DESTRUCTION* OF SUPERMAN!

SO MUCH ENERGY... SO MANY *YEARS* I'VE DEVOTED TO THAT END...

"... AND AT SUCH *COST*! BECAUSE OF SUPERMAN, I'VE HAD TO ENDURE THIS... *MUTILATION*! WERE IT NOT FOR HIM, I WOULD NEVER HAVE LAID HANDS ON--

"--KRYPTONITE!"

THE ONLY SUBSTANCE IN ALL THE WORLD THAT CAN *KILL* YOU, SUPERMAN. AND I HAVE IT!

HOW DOES *THAT* FEEL, OLD BOY? HOW DOES IT FEEL TO KNOW YOUR *LIFE* IS IN *MY HANDS*? TO KNOW THAT ALL I HAVE TO DO IS *STAND* HERE... AND THE *KRYPTONITE RADIATION* WILL DO THE REST.

BUT THAT'S *TOO EASY*, SUPERMAN. THAT'S NOT THE WAY I WANT TO *PLAY* THIS LITTLE *GAME* OF OURS.

I WANT YOU TO *WORRY* ABOUT IT, SUPERMAN. I WANT YOU TO HAVE *NIGHTMARES*.

PRELIMINARY STUDIES INDICATED KRYPTONITE TO BE HARMLESS TO HUMAN BEINGS... BUT THEY NEGLECTED TO CONSIDER THE LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF CONTINUOUS EXPOSURE.

THE VERY TOOL THAT KEPT SUPERMAN AT BAY WOULD'VE KILLED ME IN TIME.

I SHOULD HAVE KILLED HIM WHEN I FIRST HAD THE CHANCE...

...FROM ALL INDICATIONS, I'LL NOT GET ANOTHER. EVEN THE LOCAL PRESS IS BEGINNING TO SUSPECT WHAT I HAVE KNOWN FOR DAYS...

DAILY Ø PLANET

WHERE IS SUPERMAN?

HERO NOT SEEN SINCE INVASION

GUARDIAN VOWS TO PROTECT CITY

THE GOVERNMENT REMAINS MUM, BUT MY CONTACTS IN THE *DEFENSE DEPARTMENT* PASSED ALONG THESE *PHOTOGRAPHS* TAKEN LAST WEEK BY A *U.S.* SPY SATELLITE--

--SHOWING SUPERMAN HEADING OFF INTO DEEP SPACE. THERE'S BEEN NO SIGN OF HIM SINCE.

ALL AVAILABLE EVIDENCE CONFIRMS MY OWN FINDINGS... SUPERMAN HAS LEFT THE EARTH!

HE'S GONE...

...AND I DON'T KNOW *WHY!* ALL THE EFFORT I'VE PUT FORTH OVER THE YEARS--ALL THE *CATSPAWS* I'VE USED AGAINST HIM--WERE NOT ENOUGH TO DEFEAT HIM. WHY WOULD HE JUST SUDDENLY LEAVE?

WITH SUPERMAN GONE, I AM DENIED THE SATISFACTION OF HUMBLING HIM.

IN A WAY, I WILL ACTUALLY *MISS* HIM... GREAT MEN NEED GREAT CHALLENGES... AND HE WAS MY *GREATEST*!

I SHALL HAVE TO FIND NEW ONES... BUT *WHERE*?

AH... TIME FOR THE NOON REPORT.

...FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION LEVIED A 50-THOUSAND DOLLAR FINE AGAINST WLEX, WHILE CLEARING STATION OFFICIALS OF ANY WRONGDOING IN A RECENT BROADCAST--

KLK

--WHICH BLANKETED ALL LOCAL CHANNELS WHEN AN EQUIPMENT MALFUNCTION INADVERTENTLY RESULTED IN THE LIVE TRANSMISSION OF THIS TESTIMONIAL CEREMONY FOR LEXCORP FOUNDER LEX LUTHOR...

WLEX

WCBS

LEX IS A GIVER, NOT A TAKER.

HE'S GIVEN THIS MAN, WHO PREVIOUSLY COULD NOT WALK, THE BENEFITS OF THE TECHNICAL WIZARDRY OF LEXCORP...

DR. EMIL HAMILTON

JOSE DELGADO

IT TOOK AN ENTIRE *CORPS* OF LAWYERS TO SELL THAT "*MALFUNCTION*" STORY TO THE *FCC*. THAT WAS A CLEVER BIT OF WORK ON HAMILTON'S PART... TURNING THE TABLES ON ME WITH MY OWN STATION...

...I'LL MAKE HIM *PAY* FOR THAT.

I WONDER HOW THE *COMPETITION* IS HANDLING THE STORY?

...LITTLE MORE THAN A SLAP ON THE WRIST! WLEX'S ACTION WAS AN ARROGANT USURPATION OF THE AIRWAVES.

THE FCC SHOULD REVOKE WLEX'S LICENSE AND BEGIN A THOROUGH INVESTIGATION OF LEXCORP'S OTHER COMMUNICATIONS HOLDINGS.

I'M MORGAN EDGE. AND THAT'S... ONE MAN'S OPINION!

PREDICTABLE.

IN OTHER NEWS, THE UNCLAIMED REMAINS OF CIRCUS MENTALIST MILTON MOSES FINE WERE LAID TO REST IN A PAUPER'S GRAVE.

FINE, BETTER KNOWN AS BRAINIAC, HAD COMMITTED SUICIDE FOLLOWING A CONFRONTATION WITH SUPERMAN.

HAH! THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK!

THE CITY BURIED SOME ANONYMOUS DERELICT...

KLAK

... THE REAL BRAINIAC LIES SEMICONSCIOUS IN A SECURE LABORATORY SEVERAL FLOORS BELOW... THANKS TO MY DOCTORS AND A CHAIN OF SERENDIPITOUS CIRCUMSTANCES.

HE IS OF LITTLE USE TO ME IN THAT STATE, BUT I DARE NOT ALLOW HIM TO BECOME TOO COHERENT.

BEFORE I MANAGED TO GET HIM FULLY ENTHRALLED, HE HAD USED HIS REMARKABLE MENTAL POWERS TO ALL BUT *TAKE OVER* MY BUSINESSES.

THAT WILL NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN! *NEVER!!*

FOR TOO LONG SUPERMAN CONSUMED MY THOUGHTS AND ENERGIES! *NO MORE!* NOW THAT HE'S GONE--

--LEX LUTHOR WILL SHOW THE WORLD WHAT *POWER REALLY* IS!

ONE HOUR LATER...

THIS CORPORATION HAS BECOME *COMPLACENT*, AND I WON'T HAVE THAT! I WANT TO HEAR IDEAS FOR NEW PROJECTS, NEW ACQUISITIONS... SOMETHING THAT WILL PUT THE LEXCORP NAME ON EVERYONE'S LIPS!

YES, *EAGLETON*?

PEOPLE ALWAYS HAVE TO *EAT*, SIR! FOOD SERVICES SHOULD BE OUR NEXT GROWTH AREA! THERE'S A HIGH RETURN, AND WE ONLY HAVE TO PAY THE *MINIMUM WAGE*!

BUT, GEORGE, WE ALREADY OWN THE *RALLI'S FAMILY RESTAURANT* CHAIN... AND *BUN-'N'-RUN* FAST FOODS!

WE *DO*?

SIR, IF I *MAY*?

OUR NEED FOR PRECISION TOOLING CONTINUES... BUT THE *COST* OF TOOLING IS ESCALATING AT AN EVER-GREATER PACE. IF WE OPEN OUR OWN *TOOL PLANT*, WE'D RECOUP THE INVESTMENT IN SAVINGS WITHIN FIVE YEARS.

SIMMONS, YOU DISAPPOINT ME.

DIDN'T *ANY* OF YOU HEAR WHAT I SAID? I WANT MORE THAN MERE SAVINGS. I WANT A *CHALLENGE*! I WANT...

S.T.A.R.

OF COURSE!

SIMMONS... EAGLETON... YOU'RE *FIRED*!

ABERNATHY, COME WITH ME!

...AND THIS IS S.T.A.R. LABS CENTRAL COMPUTING COMPLEX.

ACCORDING TO THEIR STOCKHOLDER'S REPORT, THIS INSTALLATION ROUTES DATA AND INFORMATION TO OVER TWO DOZEN RESEARCH CENTERS IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA.

INCLUDING THEIR NEW *PSIONICS LAB* IN THE ROCKIES, ABERNATHY?

LEXCORP

LUTHOR 231

YES, SIR.

CURRENT INTERNATIONAL HOLDINGS?

A RESEARCH COMPLEX IN FRANCE... AND NEXT WEEK GROUND WILL BE BROKEN FOR A MAJOR NEW FACILITY IN JAPAN.

EXCELLENT!

ARE YOU THINKING OF A LONG TERM INVESTMENT, SIR?

NOTHING SO *PLEBEIAN*, ABERNATHY! IT IS TIME TO PAINT IN BOLD STROKES! WHAT DO YOU THINK THE REACTION WOULD BE TO A *TAKEOVER BID*?

A TAKE--? SIR, THE S.T.A.R. LABS HOLDINGS RIVAL OUR OWN! YOU'RE TALKING *BILLIONS*! THE STOCK MARKET WOULD GO *WILD*!

LEXCORP HAS NO RIVALS, ABERNATHY! BUT YOU'RE RIGHT ON ONE COUNT...

...THE MARKET WILL MOST ASSUREDLY GO WILD!

LUTHOR'S HOSTILE TAKEOVER CONTINUES NEXT WEEK IN ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN #453!

(WARN YOUR BROKER!)

THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN®

JERRY ORDWAY
WORDS AND PICTURES

ALBERT DE GUZMAN
LETTERING

GLENN WHITMORE
COLORING

MIKE CARLIN
EDITOR

SUPERMAN CREATED BY
JERRY SIEGEL AND
JOE SHUSTER

APPARITIONS

"THE INTENSE COLD... THE ABSOLUTE SILENCE... BOTH ARE NOW FAMILIAR TO ME..."

"THE REALIZATION HITS -- I'M BACK. BACK TO A WORLD THAT WAS ONCE VIBRANT AND ALIVE..."

"A WORLD THAT NOW STANDS BARREN AND LIFELESS, BECAUSE OF A TRIO OF VICIOUS MURDERERS!"

"I SENTENCED THEM TO DEATH FOR THEIR HEINOUS AND UNREPENTANT ACT -- IT WAS THE ONLY WAY I SAW TO PREVENT THEM FROM DOING THIS TO MY HOME WORLD EARTH LATER.

"HOW COULD SUCH A LOGICAL DECISION HAVE CONDEMNED ME TO THE GUILT I NOW CARRY?"

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SUPERMAN--WE'VE WAITED SO LONG...

WE KNOW YOU HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN US...

WE HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN YOU, OR FORGIVEN YOU FOR LEAVING US HERE!

QUEX-UL! ZAORA! ZOD! YOU'RE DEAD!

I WATCHED YOU DIE FROM KRYPTONITE POISONING!

THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING!

YOU ROBBED US OF OUR POWERS WITH GOLD KRYPTONITE, KAL-EL...

WHAT YOU DIDN'T KNOW WAS THAT POWERLESS, GREEN K HAS NO EFFECT ON US!

IT TOOK SO LONG TO DIG OUT OF OUR GRAVES...

...BUT THAT KRYPTONITE IS FAR ENOUGH UNDERGROUND NOW, THAT OUR POWERS HAVE RETURNED!

GOLD K--GREEN K--IT'S ALL TOO CONFUSING, BUT IF YOU THREE ARE REALLY ALIVE, THEN I'M NOT A MURDERER!

THAT WE STILL LIVE...

...DOES NOT ERASE YOUR INTENT TO KILL US!

THAT IS STILL YOUR BURDEN!

THAT IS STILL YOUR WEAKNESS!

NO!

"WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO NOW, JONATHAN?"

"WELL, MARTHA, WE COULDN'T JUST SAY THAT CLARK HAD GONE OFF INTO SPACE, NOW COULD WE?"

"BUT JON, TODAY WHEN THAT REPORTER, TOBY RAYNES CALLED AGAIN FROM METROPOLIS, YOU REALLY TALKED US INTO A CORNER!"

KENTS

"WHAT COULD I DO? SHE THREATENED TO INVOLVE THE POLICE IF I WOULDN'T ARRANGE FOR HER TO TALK TO OUR SON."

"JONATHAN KENT! DON'T YOU REMEMBER CLARK TELLING US THAT HER ROOMMATE WAS ON THE POLICE FORCE?"

"MAGGIE SAWYER? WELL, REGARDLESS, IF SOMEONE WAS KILLED IN CLARK'S APARTMENT, THEN THE POLICE SHOULD BE INVOLVED!"

SMALLVILLE

"WE'LL HAVE TO TELL THEM SOMETHING!"

"IT'S AWFUL TO THINK THAT AN INNOCENT MAN WAS KILLED BECAUSE HIS KILLERS THOUGHT HE WAS OUR BOY!"

"ALL BECAUSE OF THAT EXPOSE SERIES CLARK FINISHED BEFORE HE LEFT--ON SOMETHING CALLED INTERGANG!"

"WE MAILED THOSE STORIES FOR HIM, MA."

"YOU DON'T THINK WE'RE IN ANY DANGER --THAT SOMEONE MIGHT COME AFTER US?"

"DON'T THINK THAT HASN'T OCCURRED TO ME TOO, MARTHA."

"IT'S ALSO OCCURRED TO ME THAT OUR GIRL UPSTAIRS, MATRIX, WOULDN'T LET ANYTHING HAPPEN TO US."

"SHE THINKS WE'RE FAMILY."

"SHE'S RIGHT TO THINK THAT, PA. I JUST WISH YOU WOULDN'T ENCOURAGE THIS 'MATRIX' BUSINESS!"

"THAT'S JUST NO NAME FOR A GIRL!"

"SPEAKING OF HER, HADN'T YOU BETTER REMIND HER THAT HER FAVORITE SHOW IS ON 'NIK-AT-NITE'?"

MAE? HURRY UP, HONEY. "PATTY DUKE'S" ALMOST ST--

OH MY! JONATHAN! COME QUI--

MARTHA?

I WILL HELP YOU JON-A-THAN.

MATRIX?...

"WHAT ON EARTH HAVE YOU DONE?"

YOU COULD BURY US, BUT YOU COULDN'T BURY YOUR GUILT.

NO, NO!

YOU'D PLAY GOD ON OUR WORLD...

...NOT THINKING TWICE ABOUT KILLING US...

...YET YOU WOULDN'T KILL ME!

WHAT OF BRAINIAC?

I WAS INSIDE YOUR MIND--I SAW THE DARKNESS IN YOUR SOUL...

THE VOTE IS IN, KAL-EL! YOU'RE THE ONE WHO DESERVES TO DIE!

WE ACT TRUE TO OUR OWN NATURE...

...WHILE YOU, HYPOCRITE, ARE LIVING THE GREAT LIE!

SUPER-MAN?

NO! NOT MY AIR MASK!

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

:GASP:

HOW--CAN YOU--JUDGE ME--MY ACTIONS?

I'VE *GIVEN* UP SO MUCH--TO ATONE--MY FAMILY...

...MY FRIENDS...

:KAFF: :KAFF:

...MY HOME--

:KAFF:

...MY LIFE...

"I WOULDN'T BELIEVE A WORD OF IT--HE'S FULL OF WIND!"

I KNOW! IF HE *DID* TAKE OVER *S.T.A.R.* LABS, YOU'D HAVE TO TELL THEM THAT KITTY FAULKNER JUST WON'T WORK FOR LEX LUTHOR!

I WOULDN'T, EITHER--NOT THAT HE'D HAVE ME AFTER THE *STINKER* I PULLED ON HIM!

YOU DIDN'T SEE THAT SKINHEAD'S FACE PLASTERED ALL OVER THE TUBE THE OTHER DAY?

WHY, HE DONATED A MILLION DOLLARS WORTH OF TECHNOLOGY TO A CRIPPLED YOUNG MAN, SO THAT HE COULD *WALK* AGAIN.

YES, JOSE DELGADO--HE WAS INJURED SAVING THAT REPORTER, LOIS LANE FROM SOME NASTY SUPER-VILLAIN-TYPE!

I READ THAT THE *FCC* FINED *WLEX* FIFTY-THOUSAND DOLLARS FOR BLANKETING ALL OF THE LOCAL STATIONS WITH HIS PROGRAMMING.

YEAH, THE WIZ'S UP HERE DIDN'T BELIEVE IT WAS AN ACCIDENT, WE FIGURED HE WANTED THE WHOLE CITY AS WITNESSES.

STAR

SO, THAT WAS *YOUR* DOING. YOU'RE A SLY ONE, EMIL, BUT TREAD LIGHTLY WHERE LUTHOR'S CONCERNED.

HOW'S YOUR FRIEND DELGADO TAKING TO HIS FREEDOM?

WHY, HE'S FINE--I'M JUST DOUBLE-CHECKING A FEW THINGS WITH HIM NOW...

YES, SURE. 'BYE!

SORRY 'BOUT THAT, SON--THAT WAS A FRIEND OF MINE OF *S.T.A.R.* LABS.

I'LL HAVE YOU BACK ON THE STREETS IN NO TIME!

I DIDN'T DO SO WELL MY LAST TIME OUT...

LET'S FACE IT--THE WORLD DOESN'T *NEED* ANOTHER SUPERHERO!

I'VE ALREADY BEEN CRIPPLED, AND I DON'T WANT TO WIND UP *DEAD*!

NONSENSE!

YOU ARE NEEDED! WITH SUPERMAN GONE, SOMEONE'S GOT TO KEEP THE STREETS SAFE FOR OLD-TIMERS LIKE ME!

EVEN IF IT MEANS GOING TO THE MAT WITH SOMEONE LIKE LUTHOR--OR EVEN INTERGANG!

YEAH, WELL I WOULD LIKE TO FIND THE GUY WHO WAS RUNNING AROUND USING MY NAME!

IT WOULD TAKE AN AWFUL LOT TO ERASE THE BAD THAT THAT GANGBUSTER DID, AND I DON'T HAVE--

HEY! PROFESSOR! WHAT'S GOING DOWN?

EGADS! REMOVE THE HELMET...

ITS CIRCUITS ARE SHORTING OUT!

GET DOWN! MY ARMOR WILL SHIELD US BOTH!

WOOM!

THANK GOD YOU'VE GOT THE REFLEXES FOR THIS JOB OR WE'D BOTH BE DEAD!

I DID WHAT I HAD TO--I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT, THOUGH...

SOMEONE'S GOT TO HOLD DOWN THE FORT...

... BUT ONLY 'TIL THE BIG-GUY'S BACK!

FIRST, I'LL NEED A NEW HELMET...

... NEXT, I'D LIKE YOU TO GO OVER THIS ARMOR AGAIN...

...I'D HATE FOR THIS TO HAPPEN TO THE COD-PIECE-- WHILE I'M WEARING IT!

:GASP:

YOU :KAFF: WERE MY MOST DEADLY FOES...

SURELY YOU FLATTER US, KRYPTONIAN!

WITH ALL OF YOUR EXTRAORDINARY ABILITIES...

YOU STILL CANNOT SEE THAT WHICH IS *MOST* OBVIOUS!

WE ARE THE ONES YOU *FEAR* THE MOST!

NEITHER BRAINIAC, NOR LUTHOR, NOR *ZOD* CAN COMPARE...

WE *ARE* YOU!

NOOOOO

YOU DENY IT BUT *WE* KNOW...

YOU *FEAR* THAT YOU TREAT LANA THE WAY LOIS TREATS *YOU*...

YET YOU'RE LEADING THEM BOTH ON...

YOU KNOW THAT YOU CAN NEVER BELONG TO EITHER ONE!

YOU WERE PRETTY SPECIAL BACK IN SCHOOL...

USING YOUR POWERS TO *WIN* AT SPORTS!

I'M NOT MEAN TO LANA! I'M NOT LEADING ANYONE ON--I WANT LOIS TO LOVE ME AS CLARK, NOT JUST AS SUPERMAN-- IS IT TOO MUCH TO ASK FOR?

WHY SHOULD I BE CHEATED OF A *NORMAL* LIFE? I WAS POPULAR IN SCHOOL--A *FOOTBALL* HERO-- AND THEN I REALIZED MY *OBLIGATIONS*!

THERE'S SO MUCH PENT UP IN YOU-- SO MANY FACETS TO BEING THE *HERO'S* HERO!

YOU SET FOR YOURSELF THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF CONDUCT...

STANDARDS *NO* OTHER HERO COULD LIVE BY...

...INCLUDING *YOU*!

YOU CAN'T RUN AWAY FROM YOUR PROBLEMS...

YOU CAN'T HIDE FROM *US*, SO WHY DON'T YOU FIGHT US, LIKE YOU'VE BEEN DOING THESE PAST MONTHS!

FIGHT US, SUPER-MAN!

I--I CAN'T...

I WON'T!

NOT ANYMORE! I BUILT MYSELF A GLASS HOUSE-- I SEE THAT NOW!

I'VE DRIVEN MYSELF HARD SINCE I FOUND OUT ABOUT MY POWERS, TRYING TO DO THE RIGHT THINGS.

I'M NOT PERFECT! I CAN ADMIT THAT NOW.

FIGHT US!

I CAN'T FIGHT THE TRUTH, GANGBUSTER, BUT YOU'RE A PART OF ME...

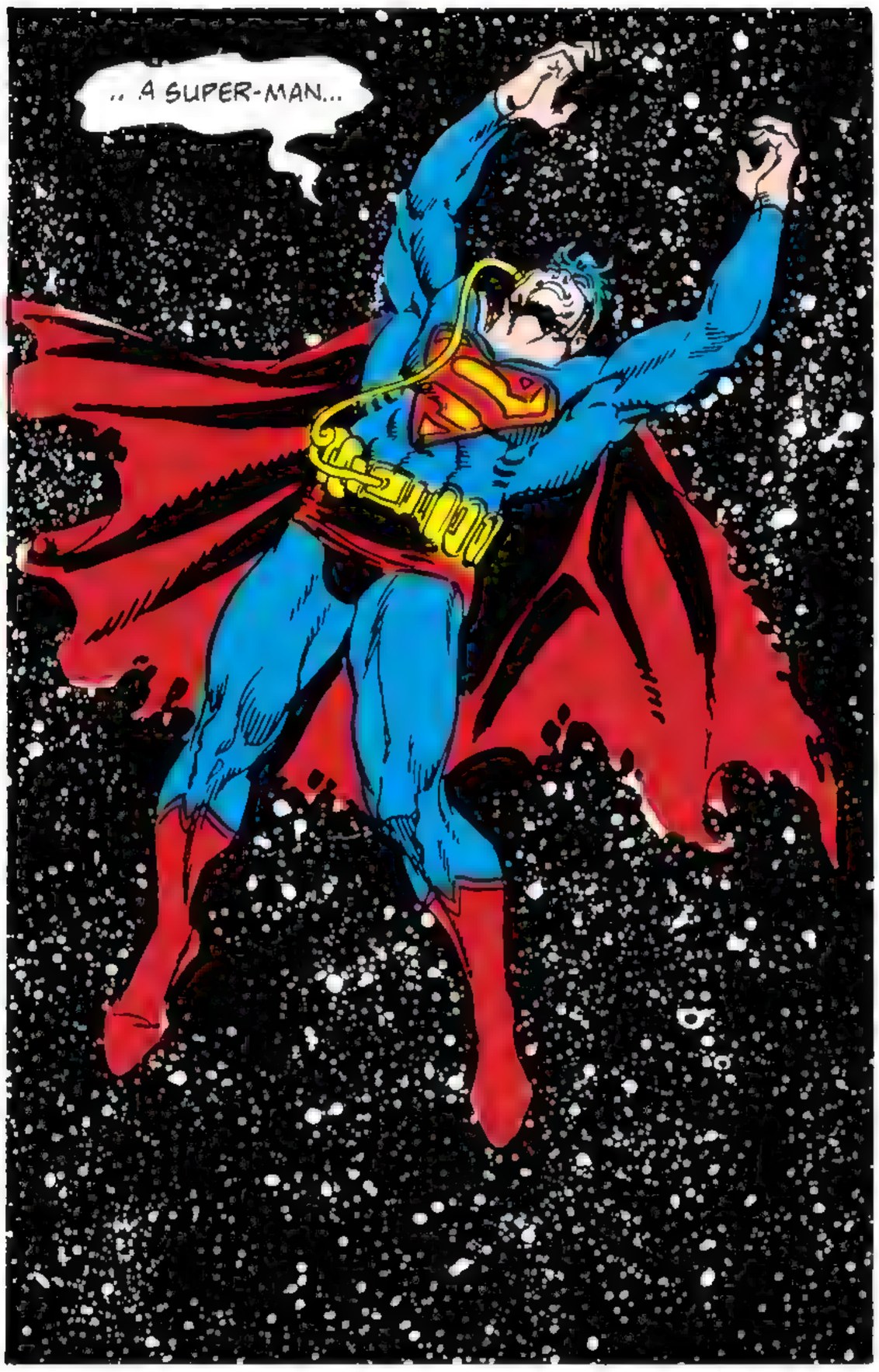
...I DON'T KNOW WHY...

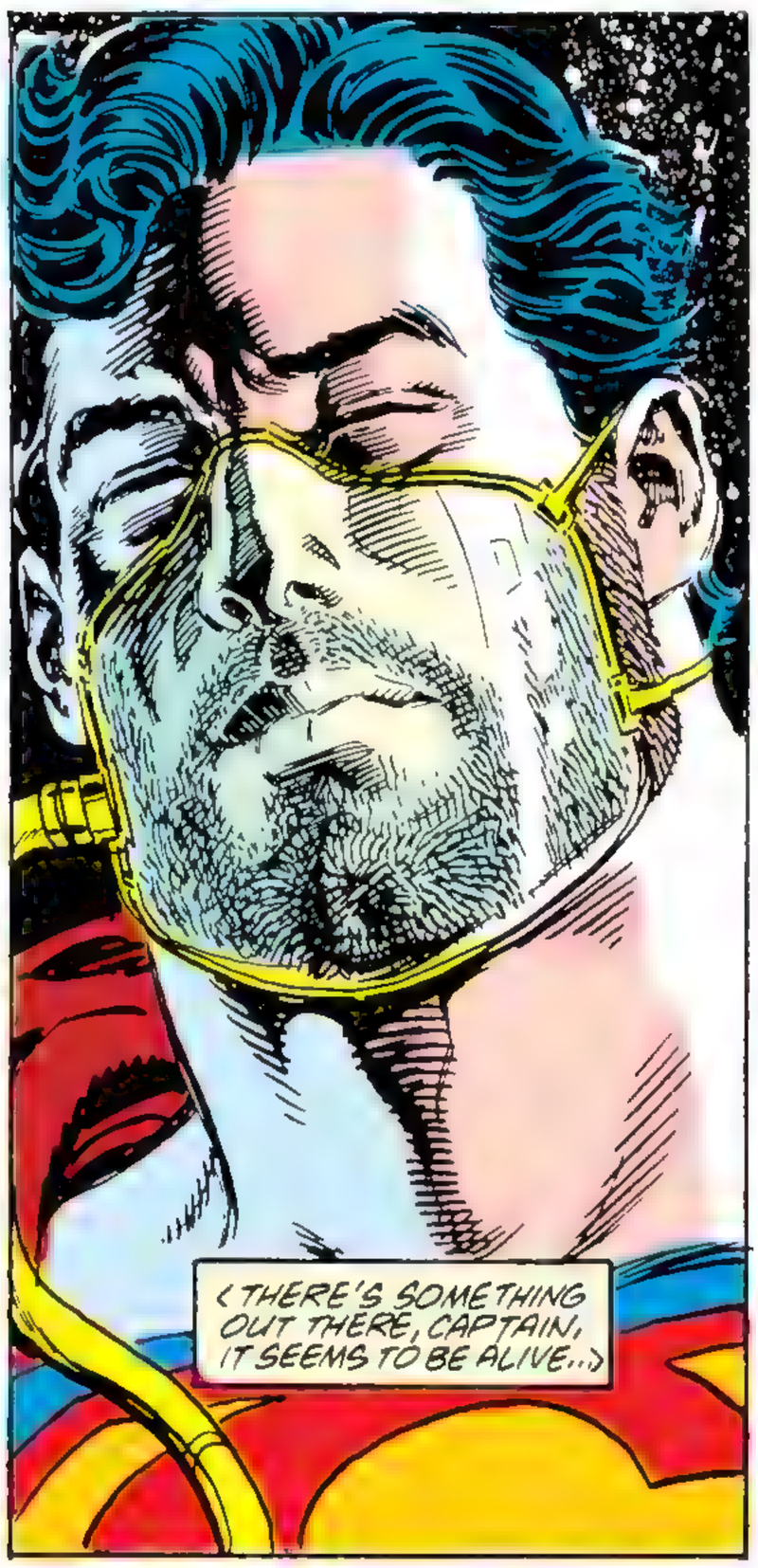
...PERHAPS TO TEMPER MY KRYPTONIAN SIDE...

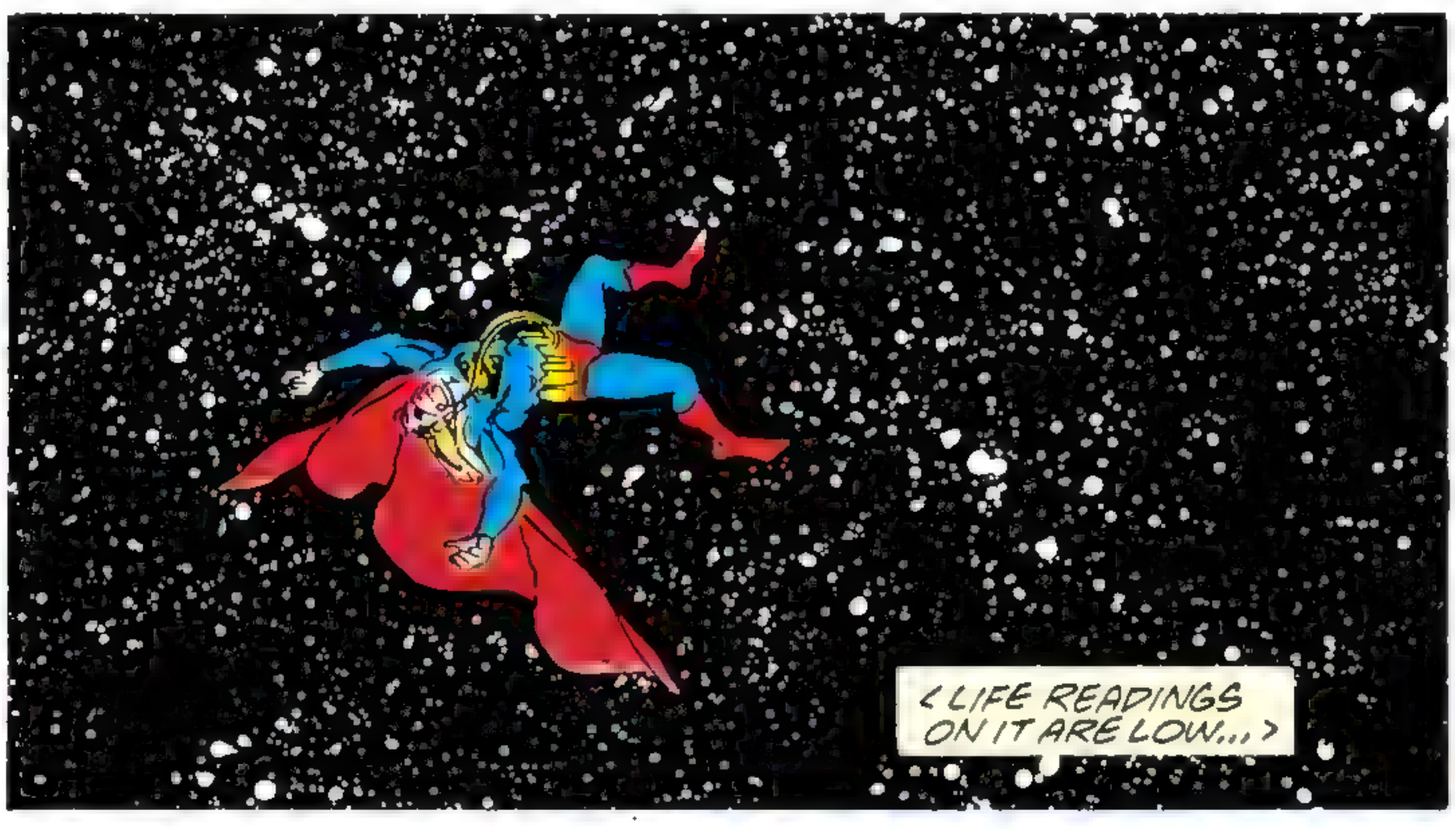
AND YOU! I CANNOT LET YOU GO...YOU'RE MY HUMAN SIDE...

YOU'RE THE MOST VITAL TO ME...

"...I'M STILL A MAN!"


.. A SUPER-MAN...


< THERE'S SOMETHING OUT THERE, CAPTAIN, IT SEEMS TO BE ALIVE...>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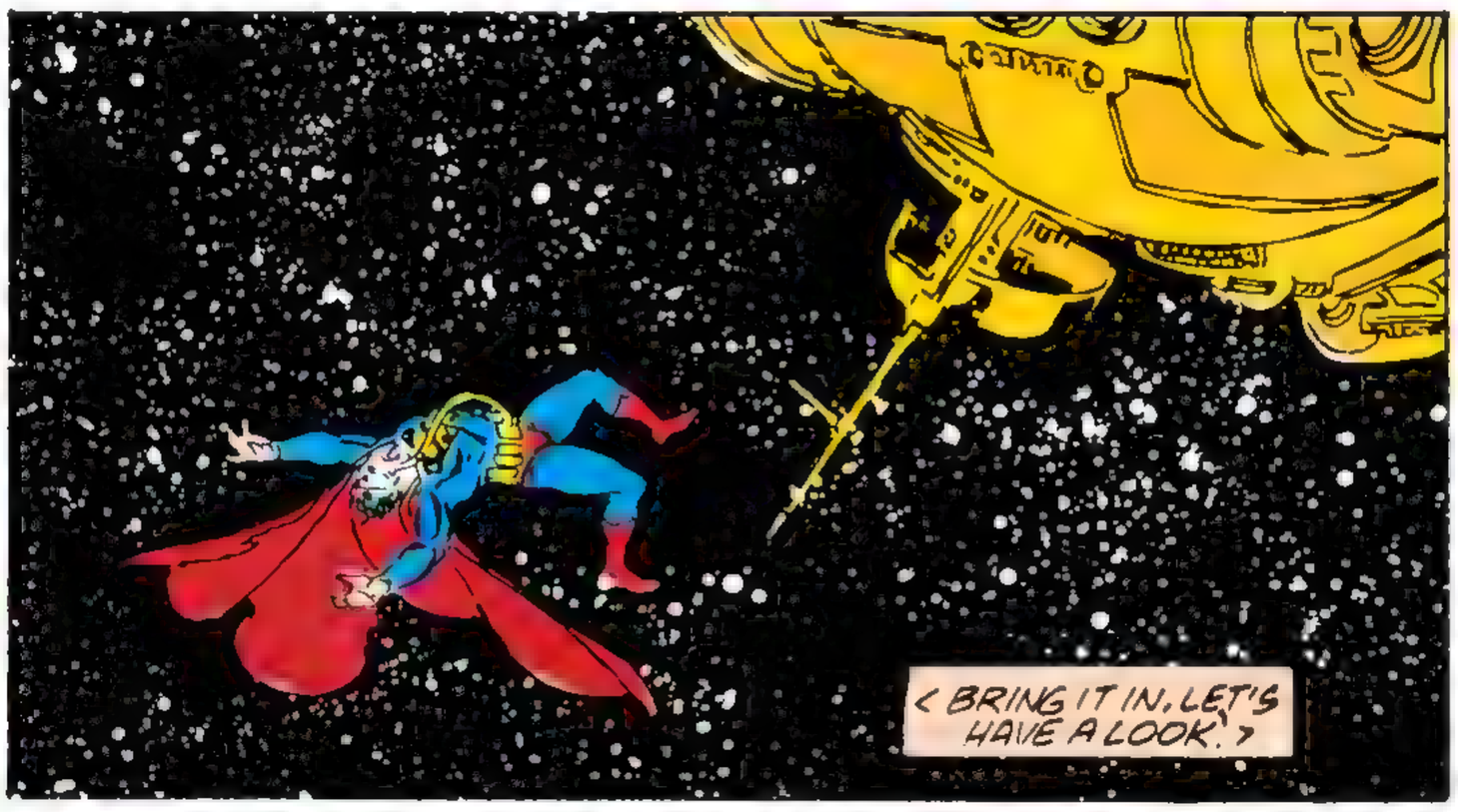
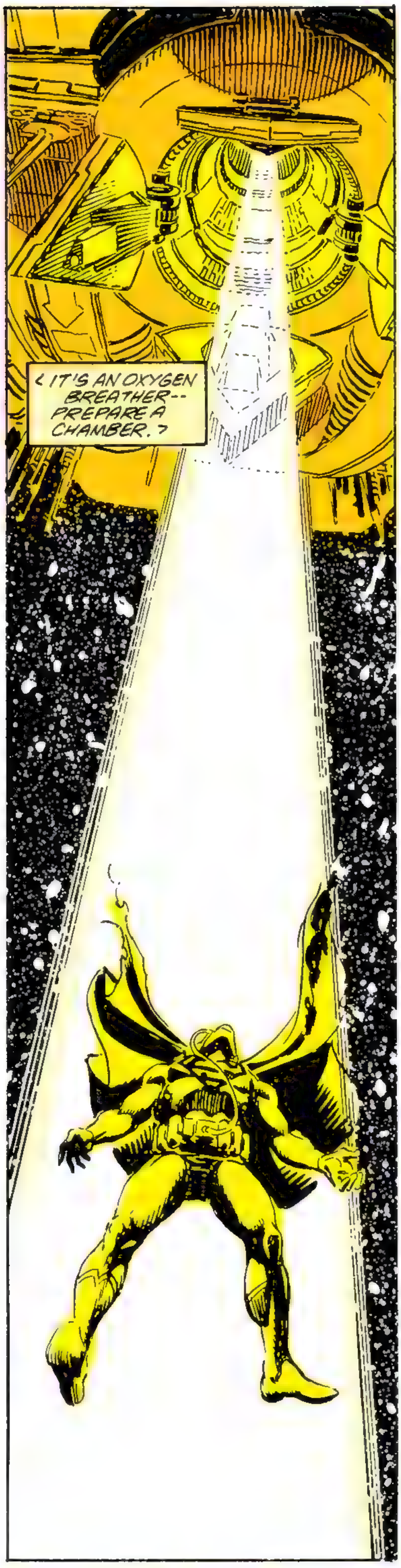
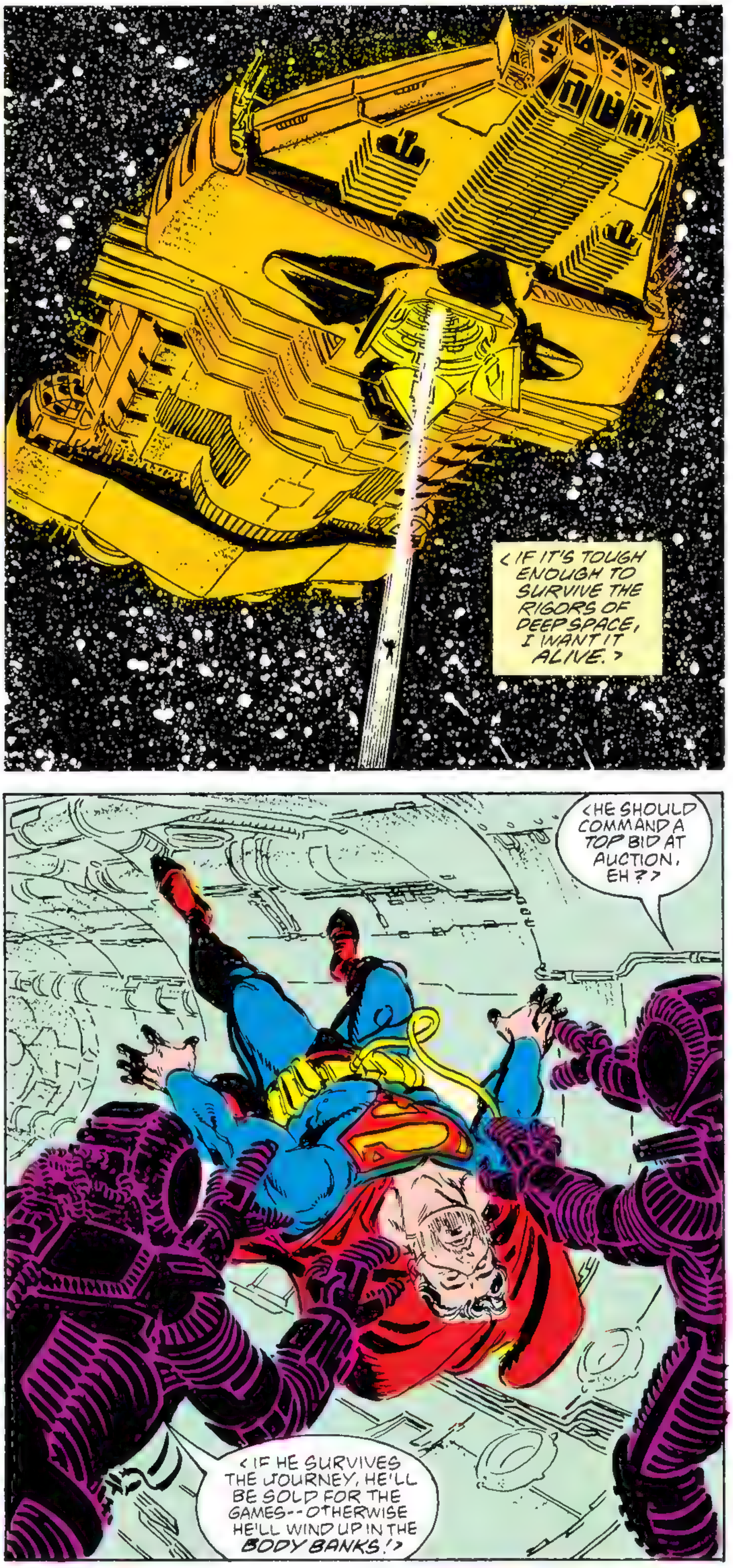

< BRING IT IN. LET'S HAVE A LOOK.>





NEXT ISSUE: "MATRIX GOES TO METROPOLIS"

BUT FIRST JOIN US IN SUPERMAN® #31 FOR THE RETURN OF MR. MXYZPTLK!

LISTEN, KEEP THIS UNDER YOUR HAT,,,

I COULD GET *FIRED* FOR TELLING YOU THIS,,,

YOU DIDN'T HEAR IT FROM *ME*, BUT IT'S A SURE THING THAT,,,

HOSTILE TAKEOVER--PART II

INSIDER RUMORS!

ROGER STERN - WRITER
DAN JURGENS & DENNIS JANKE > ARTISTS
ALBERT DEGUZMAN - LETTERER
GLENN WHITMORE - COLORIST
JERRY ORDWAY - INSIDER

G-4683

LEX LUTHOR IS GOING TO BUY OUT S.T.A.R. LABS?!?

YOU IDIOT! THAT WAS A SECRET!

I'M SORRY! THE NEWS TOOK ME BY SURPRISE!

YEAH, YOU AND EVERYONE ELSE ON THE FLOOR!

HEY, WHERE YA GOING?

TO GET MY HANDS ON SOME SHARES OF S.T.A.R.--WHILE IT'S STILL POSSIBLE!

S.T.A.R. LABS... I'M BUYING S.T.A.R. AT $24 A SHARE!

I'LL GIVE $25 A SHARE!

$26!

$27!!

THE PRICE OF SHARES IN SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCED RESEARCH LABS SKYROCKETED TODAY ON THE METROPOLIS STOCK EXCHANGE, IN THE WAKE OF RUMORS--

MSE

-- THAT BILLIONAIRE LEX LUTHOR, C.E.O. OF THE MULTINATIONAL LEXCORP GROUP, WAS CONSIDERING A BUY-OUT OF THE WORLD RENOWNED THINK-TANK.

SOURCES AT LEXCORP REFUSED TO COMMENT ON THE RUMOR, AND LUTHOR HIMSELF WAS IN TRANSIT, FUELING FURTHER SPECULATION...

THE LIMO WILL MEET YOU UPON LANDING, SIR, AND--!

HUSH, AGNES... I WANT TO HEAR THIS!

...PRICE OF S.T.A.R. PREFERRED HAD DOUBLED BY THE END OF TRADING.

DID YOU HEAR THAT? DOUBLED! MARVELOUS... ABSOLUTELY MARVELOUS!

MSE

WHY ARE YOU SO HAPPY, SIR? WON'T THE PRICE GOING UP MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT TO BUY OUT S.T.A.R.?

FOR SOMEONE ELSE, PERHAPS!

I HAD EXPECTED THIS, MY DEAR!

EVERYTHING GOES AS I WISH IT TO.

THE PRICE WILL GO EVEN HIGHER BEFORE I AM THROUGH.

MUCH HIGHER!

THIS DEAL WILL TRANSCEND THE FINANCIAL WORLD!

BEFORE IT'S OVER, THE NAME OF LEX LUTHOR WILL BE ON EVERYONE'S LIPS!

METROPOLIS.

STAR

WHAT THE BLAZES DO YOU INTEND TO DO ABOUT THIS LUTHOR BUSINESS, DURWOOD?

GENTLEMEN... LADIES... PLEASE!

THERE'S NO NEED TO GET HYSTERICAL!

SEE HERE, DURWOOD, WE WANT SOME STRAIGHT ANSWERS!

YES, WHY WEREN'T WE TOLD OF THIS TAKEOVER BID?

WE'VE BEEN DIVISION HEADS... SOME OF US FOR YEARS. YOU COULD AT LEAST HAVE HAD THE DECENCY--!

THERE IS NOTHING TO TELL! THERE HAS BEEN NO TAKEOVER BID FROM LEXCORP... NOT EVEN AN INQUIRY. IT'S ALL JUST RUMORS!

YES, AT THIS STAGE.

LOOK, EVEN IF IT WAS TRUE... LEXCORP IS A TOP-RATED CORPORATION WITH A BENEFIT PACKAGE EQUAL TO OR RIVALING OUR OWN.

IS THAT ALL YOU THINK BOTHERS US... BENEFITS?

JUST WHAT I'D EXPECT FROM A MAN WHOSE DOCTORATE IS IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION!

IF LUTHOR SINKS HIS GRUBBY HANDS INTO S.T.A.R., I'M WALKING!

ME, TOO!

WHAT? WAIT!

LEX LUTHOR IS ONE OF THE CITY'S LEADING PHILANTHROPISTS! WHAT COULD BE SO BAD--?

IT'S OBVIOUS THAT YOU'VE NEVER WORKED FOR HIM!

I HAVE! NEVER AGAIN!

TOKYO.

"AHEM, I'D LIKE TO THANK YOU ALL FOR COMING HERE TODAY. THIS IS INDEED AN AUSPICIOUS OCCASION...

"...THE BREAKING OF GROUND FOR THE NEWEST S.T.A.R. LABS FACILITY, THE FIRST ON JAPANESE SOIL."

(WON'T THIS WIND UP AS ANOTHER LEXCORP PLANT?)

(DO YOU HAVE ANY REACTIONS TO THE LEXCORP TAKEOVER BID?)

(THAT'S JUST SPECULATION. WE HAVE NO COMMENT ON--!)

(LOOK!)

(SPECULATION, EH? THEN--)

(--WHY IS *HE* HERE?)

(DON'T LET *ME* INTERRUPT, GENTLEMEN. PLEASE... GO ON WITH YOUR CEREMONY.)

(MR. LUTHOR, DO YOU HAVE A PERSONAL INTEREST IN THIS FACILITY?)

(DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT--?)

(WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS--?)

(NOW, *NOW* GENTLEMEN ...ONE AT A TIME!)

(JIMMY, I THINK WE'VE JUST BEEN UPSTAGED.)

ACTUALLY, I AM IN JAPAN FOR A BIT OF A VACATION. I FIRST HEARD OF THIS SUPPOSED TAKEOVER VIA A SATELLITE HOOKUP IN MY PRIVATE PLANE. YOU KNOW HOW IT IS WITH THESE RUMORS!

THEN YOU HAVE NO INTEREST IN S.T.A.R. LABS?

OH, I THINK THE WHOLE WORLD SHOULD BE INTERESTED IN S.T.A.R.--THEY ARE, AFTER ALL, AT THE CUTTING EDGE OF TECHNOLOGY.

BUT YOU HAVE NO INTENTIONS OF BIDDING--?

WELL, I NEVER SAY "NEVER".

S.T.A.R. IS AN ADMITTEDLY ATTRACTIVE PROPERTY...

IN THE HOME OF METROPOLIS DAILY PLANET EDITOR PERRY WHITE...

...THINK THE WHOLE WORLD SHOULD BE INTERESTED IN S.T.A.R....

GREAT CAESAR'S GHOST... NOW WHAT? WHENEVER LUTHOR IS PLAYING IT *THAT* COY, HE'S UP TO SOMETHING!

I'D HATE TO SEE S.T.A.R. GET SUCKED INTO HIS OPERATION.

WHILE, IN THE LAB OF PROFESSOR EMIL HAMILTON...

WHAT WAS THAT?!?

WELL, I NEVER SAY "NEVER"...

YOU C#%$#! LEAVE S.T.A.R. ALONE! THEY'RE GOOD PEOPLE... THEY FUND MY RESEARCH AND LET ME WORK IN PEACE!

THEY DON'T TWIST MY INVENTIONS! NOT LIKE YOU, YOU... THIEF!

CHOOM

...AND FOR THE QUALITY OF WORK THEY DO, I'VE LONG FELT THAT THEIR STOCK IS GROSSLY UNDERVALUED.

IT IS THE SORT OF GOING CONCERN THAT LEXCORP WOULD BE INTERESTED IN.

AND, IN THE MIDTOWN PENTHOUSE OF GALAXY COMMUNICATIONS PRESIDENT MORGAN EDGE...

I'LL HAVE TO GIVE IT SOME THOUGHT. WHO KNOWS?

GIVE IT SOME THOUGHT... RIGHT!

WHAT ARE YOU UP TO, LUTHOR?

"WHAT'RE YOU PLANNING NOW?"

YOU SEE LUTHOR ON THE TUBE LAST NIGHT?

YEAH. NOW I'M STUCK WITH THIS S.T.A.R. STOCK!

STUCK? DIDN'T YOU HEAR WHAT HE SAID?

HE'LL NEVER BID!

THINK WHAT YOU WANT, I'M BUYING ALL THE S.T.A.R. I CAN GET MY HANDS ON!

IT'S HIM!!!

I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT THIS TAKEOVER BUSINESS.

WOULD ANYONE BE INTERESTED IN SELLING THEIR STOCK IN S.T.A.R. FOR... OH... SAY $50 A SHARE?

HERE!

YES!

TEN THOUSAND SHARES--THEY'RE ALL YOURS!

HAH HAH HAH HAH HA!

...TO BE CONTINUED IN SUPERMAN #31

The Staff and Management of DC Comics regret that

SUPERMAN

Created by JERRY SIEGEL & JOE SHUSTER

has been detained in deep space and is unavailable to appear in this issue. We are therefore forced to present that devil from the fifth dimension...

MR. MXYZPTLK! in As Good As His Word!

Editor MIKE CARLIN made us do it!
--signed--
ROGER STERN
scripter/co-plotter
TOM PEYER
co-plotter
PARIS CULLINS
guest-penciller
DENNIS JANKE
inker
JOHN COSTANZA
letterer
GLENN WHITMORE
colorist

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NYAHH!

THE BUS. WHAT'S HAPPENING TO THE BUS?!

SO I SAID TO MYSELF, ;PUFF; "SELF, IT'S ABOUT TIME WE PAID A VISIT TO OUR OLD PAL, SUPER-SHNOOK!"

HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO FIND THE BIG STUPE--

"--SO I'LL JUST HAVE TO LET HIM FIND ME!"

ZOOM IZ'D

THIS IS BAD...

...THIS IS VERY BAD!

OPERATIONS REPORT?

THAT MENACE COULD LEVEL METROPOLIS BEFORE HE REALIZES THAT SUPERMAN HAS LEFT THE EARTH!

URBAN ASSAULT TEAM HAS BEEN SCRAMBLED, MR. LUTHOR. ETA IS SIXTY SECONDS.

DON'T WORRY, SIR, MY BOYS WILL DROP THAT GIANT!

LEX

STILL NO SUPERMAN, EH? THE POOR BOY MUST BE SLEEPING LATE!

IT WOULD BE A LOW-DOWN *DIRTY SHAME* IF SOMEBODY MADE A LOT OF *NOISE* AND WOKE HIM UP, WOULDN'T IT?

CONTACT!

KOOL JADE NOD

KTOOM

WHAT THE--?!

YEEOW!

THE *NERVE* OF THIS CITY, HIDING SUCH A *FUN TRAIN* UNDERGROUND!

BUT IT'S STILL SO SLOW... LET'S MAKE IT RUN *FASTER!!*

NO! NOOO!!

RELAX, SIR. I'VE GOT YOU.

HUH?! W-WHO'RE YOU SUPPOSED TO BE... ROBOCOP?

TEAM LUTHOR, SIR WITH SUPERMAN GONE--

"--WE'RE ON THE JOB!"

WHAT'S THIS--FLYING ROBOTS?

OHHH, I'VE SEEN TOYS LIKE THIS BEFORE...

...YOU CAN TURN THEM INTO OTHER THINGS!

WH-WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO--?

LEX

NO...DON'T! STOP!!

EEEEYAAAA!!

OH, DOPEY ME! I SHOULD HAVE CHECKED TO SEE IF ANYONE WAS INSIDE THOSE SUITS!

TSK-TSK! GETTING FOLDED UP LIKE THAT MUST REALLY SMART!

AM I RIGHT? DOES IT *HURT?*

:AWRK:

WHAT'S THAT? *SPEAK UP, SON--* WHO SENT YOU?

LEX LUTHOR, HUH?

BIG MAN IN THIS TOWN, FROM WHAT I'VE SEEN...

...BUT *I'M* ***BIGGER!***

VEKKO!!

S-SIR?

I WANT EVERYTHING WE HAVE ON THIS *MIX-UL-PLICK* CREATURE! I WANT TO KNOW HOW HE THINKS, WHAT HE EATS, THE WORKS!

YES, SIR--

--RIGHT AWAY, SIR!

KRUK

LUTHOR!!

IT CAN'T BE. YOU'RE *GONE*... OFF INTO SPACE! I'D HAVE BEEN *TOLD* IF YOU RETURNED!

WELL, I'M BACK... YOU'VE JUST BEEN TOLD!

YOUR CIGAR'S GONE OUT.

LET ME *LIGHT* IT FOR YOU!

GYAAH!

M-MY *PROSTHETIC*!!

BIONICS, LUTHOR? I HOPE YOU HAVE A FEW *REPLACEMENTS* ON HAND!

I'M *THROUGH* FOOLING AROUND WITH YOU!

I'VE BEEN WANTING TO DO *THIS*--

--FOR A *LONG* TIME!

:*MMM-MWAH!*:

W-W-WHAT?!?

SMAK!

OOK-OOK! DON'T LOOK NOW, LEXIE, BUT THERE'S A *MONKEY* ON YOUR BACK!

HA HA HA HA

THE LOOK ON YOUR *FACE!* *HEH-HEHHH!*

GET-OFF-ME-THIS-*INSTANT!*

SORRY, SON--BUT I'M AFIXIN' TO *RIDE!*

YEE-*HAW!*

JAB

YARRGH!!

@%$@#$@!!

POP!

OVER *HERE,* BALDY!

I'LL COME RIGHT TO THE POINT--WITH SUPER-DUPE GONE, YOU LOOK TO BE THE ONLY REAL POWER IN TOWN. SO, *YOU* GET TO BE MY WHIPPING BOY!

LEX LUTHOR IS NO ONE'S--!

HERE'S THE *DEAL*... GET ME TO SHAVE MY HEAD AS BALD AS *YOURS*, AND I'LL LEAVE.

UNTIL THEN, I'M GONNA HAVE ME SOME *FU-U-UN!*

TAH-TAH, CHUCKLES!

VEKKO!

HERE, SIR! I'VE CORRELATED ALL KNOWN REPORTS OF THE SUBJECT AND -- GOOD HEAVENS! YOUR HAND --!

NEVER MIND THAT. WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

UH...WELL...MXYZPTLK FIRST APPEARED SOME SIX MONTHS AGO, CLAIMING TO BE FROM WHAT HE CALLED THE FIFTH DIMENSION--

-- AND EXHIBITING POWERS THAT TRANSCEND ALL KNOWN LAWS OF PHYSICS. BOTH THE DAILY PLANET BUILDING AND A FAST-FOOD TRADEMARK WERE LITERALLY BROUGHT TO LIFE AT HIS WHIM!

HE ALSO TURNED REPORTER LOIS LANE INTO A MANNEQUIN, AND TRANSFORMED A TV GAME-SHOW SET INTO A SORT OF TORTURE CHAMBER... ALL EFFORTLESSLY.

FIRING SQUAD

ELECTROCUTION

STALLOR

TELL ME SOMETHING THAT I DON'T KNOW! ARE THERE ANY LIMITS TO HIS POWERS?

I-I-INSUFFICIENT DATA, SIR. BUT EACH TIME HE HAS RETURNED TO HIS.. DIMENSION, THE THINGS HE CHANGED WERE RETURNED TO NORMAL.

HAS HE ANY WEAKNESS THAT CAN BE EXPLOITED?

U-UNKNOWN... SUPERMAN WAS ABLE TO STOP MXYZPTLK ONLY BY MEETING HIS CHALLENGES, A-AND BESTING HIM ACCORDING TO THE RULES OF HIS GAMES.

HIS GAMES?!?

Y-YES. A-AND MXYZPTLK HAS ALWAYS KEPT HIS WORD.

THE ONLY THING YOU CAN TELL ME ABOUT THE LITTLE GEEK IS THAT HE'S HONEST?!?

CLEAN OUT YOUR DESK!!

; DING ;
MR. LUTHOR?

YES?

RECOVERY CREW REPORTS ALL MEMBERS OF TEAM LUTHOR ACCOUNTED FOR, SIR. THEY'RE ALIVE, BUT JUST BARELY -- THEY HAVE TO BE CUT OUT OF THEIR... SUITS.

SIR, WE'RE GETTING UNBELIEVABLE REPORTS FROM THE BROADCAST DIVISION. *WLEX* HAS A CAMERA CREW IN MIDTOWN AND --!

GIVE ME A *VISUAL*...

ISLAND

BEFORE

TIMES

DEVIL REX

ROCK COLA

MY GOD!

BILLBOARDS COMING TO LIFE, BUILDINGS *MELTING!* THAT MANIAC WILL DESTROY MY CITY UNLESS HE'S STOPPED.

BUT HOW DO YOU STOP AN HONEST --?

WAIT A MOMENT, VEKKO!

DID YOU SAY THAT MXYZPTLK HAS ALWAYS KEPT HIS WORD? HE NEVER *LIES*?

THAT'S CORRECT. DESPITE EVERYTHING, MXYZPTLK SEEMS SHOCKINGLY *NAIVE* ABOUT SOME THINGS. IT'S CONCEIVABLE THAT HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT A LIE IS!

THEN I'VE *GOT* HIM!

PUT THOSE THINGS DOWN, VEKKO...

" .. WE HAVE WORK TO DO!"

THIS ISN'T AS MUCH FUN WITHOUT *SUPER-JERK* AROUND TO DRIVE CRAZY. BALDY HASN'T PRESENTED MUCH OF A CHALLENGE AT ALL.

MAYBE I NEED TO DO SOMETHING BIGGER .. MORE INVENTIVE.

SA-A-AY, I KNOW! METROPOLIS LOOKS SO DREARY AND DIRTY I'LL JUST MAKE IT RAIN *BLEACH*... THAT'LL MAKE THE WHOLE PLACE WHITER AND BRIGHTER!

KRIK

MXYZPTLK

EH? WHAT'S *THIS?* MY NAME... ON A *BLIMP?*

MEET ME AT THE YANKEE CLIPPER BARBER SHOP...CORNER OF 4TH AND SIKELA

HE WANTS ME TO MEET HIM *WHERE?!?*

WHAT A CARD! DOES HE THINK I'LL JUST WALTZ IN AND BE OVERCOME BY THE DESIRE FOR A *SHAVE?*

OKAY, CHROME-DOME, YOU PIQUED MY CURIOSITY!

GLAD YOU COULD MAKE IT, MXYZPTLK. THESE ARE MY ATTORNEYS...

HAH! YOU'RE KIDDING, RIGHT?

ALL THE SLICK LAWYERS IN THE WORLD CAN'T GET *ME* TO SHAVE MY HEAD!

SLAP

YOU MISUNDERSTAND. I AM A BUSINESSMAN, AND BEFORE I ENTER INTO ANY VENTURE, THERE MUST BE A CONTRACT.

MY STAFF'S DRAWN UP SUCH A DOCUMENT, CLEARLY STATING YOUR CHALLENGE.

I'VE HEARD THAT LAWYERS CAN'T DO *ANYTHING* CLEARLY.

SEE FOR YOURSELF.

SNATCH

HMMM... MY DEAL, ALL RIGHT... DON'T SEE WHY IT TOOK SIX LAWYERS TO SPELL IT OUT. HEY, WHAT'S THIS "*ANTI-VIOLENCE CLAUSE*"?

THAT'S STANDARD... IT SIMPLY STATES THAT I WILL INITIATE NO VIOLENT ACTION AGAINST YOU DURING THE RUN OF THE CONTRACT. I'VE ALREADY SIGNED...

"...IF YOU WOULD BE SO KIND AS TO DO LIKEWISE--?"

Mxyz

OKAY, IF YOU WANT TO BE THAT BIG A *SUCKER*-

-- I'LL HUMOR YOU, BUT YOU'LL BE SORRY YOU PROMISED NOT TO--HEY! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

AS I TOLD YOU, I AM A BUSINESS-MAN...

"... I NEVER HANDLE THE DIRTY WORK MYSELF!"

KLAK

WHA--?

BUDDABUDDABUDDA

;KLIK; ON BEHALF OF MR. LUTHOR AND THE ENTIRE LEX CORP FAMILY--

--PLEASE ACCEPT THIS TOKEN OF OUR ESTEEM ;KLIK;

SNAP

NAPALM

IN A HEAVILY REINFORCED BUNKER FIFTY FEET BELOW...

SURPRISE AND DECEIT, VEKKO, THAT'S THE KEY! MY COMPLIMENTS TO OUR ROBOTIC DIVISION.

AND YOU'RE CERTAIN THAT SUPERMAN NEVER ONCE TRIED TO OUT RIGHT ELIMINATE THE LITTLE DEVIL?

YES, SIR. BUT MXYZPTLK IS SO POWERFUL! WHAT IF THIS...

"... DOESN'T WORK?!?"

L-LUTHOR!

WHAT... IS THE *MEANING* OF THIS? YOU... SIGNED THE *CONTRACT*... YOU *PROMISED* NOT TO ATTACK ME!

YES, WELL...

...OBVIOUSLY, I *LIED*.

IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE WAY I DO BUSINESS... SUE ME.

SUE? YOU... I... EE... *OOHHH*!! I'VE *NEVER*... I CAN'T *BELIEVE*... NO ONE HAS *EVER* CHEATED ME SO DELIBERATELY--!

LUTHOR... YOU'RE NOTHING BUT A FAT SLIMY *WORM*!

M-MR. LUTHOR? OMIGOD, WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO HIM?

THIS PLACE IS NO FUN AT ALL! IT'S JUST... THE *PITS*!

I *HATE* THIS CITY... I HATE THIS WHOLE STINKING *WORLD*! YOU CAN ALL WALLOW IN YOUR OWN MIRE FOR ALL I CARE!

NO! NOOOO!!

I'M NEVER COMING BACK HERE AGAIN! NEVER!!

AA-AA-AA!

H-HE'S GONE?

VEKKO! GET HOLD OF YOURSELF, MAN!

YES... AND EVERYTHING IS BACK TO NORMAL, JUST AS YOU SAID.

SIR, YOU TOOK A TERRIBLE *RISK*, STANDING UP TO HIM LIKE THAT!

THERE WAS NO OTHER POSITION TO TAKE, VEKKO...

...HE HAD ME BACKED INTO A CORNER. BUT I PULLED IT OFF -- I BEAT HIM ON *MY* TERMS, NOT HIS. THAT'S MORE THAN *SUPERMAN* EVER DID!

AND NOW, WE NEVER HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THE LITTLE DEMON AGAIN!

NEVER? B-B-BUT WHAT IF HE *CHANGES HIS MIND*? WHAT IF HE *DOES* COME BACK? WHAT IF THIS EXPERIENCE HAS TAUGHT *HIM* TO LIE?

WHAT THEN, MR. LUTHOR? *WHAT THEN?!?*

THE END

GOOD LORD.

AND YOU SAY THAT MORRIS HERE IS IN THE BEST SHAPE, DOCTOR?

I'M AFRAID SO, MR. LUTHOR. ALL OF YOUR MEN SUFFERED SEVERE *SPINAL CORD INJURIES.*

IF HE'S *LUCKY*, MORRIS WILL BE LEFT ONLY PARTIALLY PARALYZED. WE WON'T KNOW UNTIL HE COMES OUT OF THE COMA.

DOCTOR, THESE MEN WERE INJURED IN THE DEFENSE OF THIS CITY. THEY'RE *HEROES*, EVERY LAST ONE OF THEM!

I WANT THEM TO HAVE THE VERY BEST CARE... HANG THE EXPENSE.

LEX LUTHOR... TO MOST *METROPOLITANS* HE'S JUST THE NAME ON A BUILDING, A SIGNATURE THAT APPEARS ON THEIR PAYCHECKS.

BUT LEX LUTHOR IS IS ALSO A MAN WHO *CARES.*

IN THE WAKE OF SUPERMAN'S MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE, HE ORGANIZED AND FUNDED THE SPECIAL FORCES OF *TEAM LUTHOR* TO PROTECT METROPOLIS FROM EXTRAORDINARY MENACES.

TODAY, THOSE FORCES WERE FELLED BY THE BIZARRE CREATURE CALLED *MXYZPTLK*

LET THE RECORD SHOW THAT LEX LUTHOR WAS THE FIRST TO VISIT *"HIS BOYS"* HERE IN THE *TRAUMA WARD* OF METROPOLIS'S MEMORIAL HOSPITAL.

WLEX

WLEX

SCOTT HARRIS REPORTING... FOR W-L-E-X... THE *NEWS* LEADER...

HOSTILE TAKEOVER-- PART III

POISON PILL!

DAN JURGENS & DENNIS JANKE
ARTISTS

ALBERT DE GUZMAN - LETTERER
GLENN WHITMORE - COLORIST
JERRY ORDWAY - PHARMACIST

G-4680

THANK YOU, SCOTT.

IN A RELATED STORY, LUTHOR DECLINED TO SHED ANY MORE LIGHT ON THE GROWING PROBABILITY THAT HE WILL MAKE A TAKEOVER BID ON THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCED RESEARCH LABORATORIES.

LUTHOR REFERRED TO HIS SURPRISE APPEARANCE LAST WEEK AT THE METROPOLIS STOCK EXCHANGE AS "AN EXPLORATORY VISIT."

I TELL YOU, THIS WHOLE THING IS COCKEYED...

...WE HAVEN'T RECEIVED SO MUCH AS A CALL FROM LEXCORP! THEY HAVEN'T BOUGHT ANY BLOCKS OF STOCK, AND LUTHOR HASN'T MADE ANYTHING LIKE A REAL BID.

BE THAT AS IT MAY, *DURWOOD*, EVERYONE *THINKS* HE IS, AND THAT'S AFFECTING OUR OPERATIONS.

I'VE RECEIVED LETTERS FROM SOME OF OUR TOP SCIENTISTS--ALL OF THEM FORMER LEXCORP EMPLOYEES--THREATENING TO *RESIGN* IF LUTHOR TAKES US OVER. FIVE HAVE ALREADY TAKEN EARLY RETIREMENT.

THAT'S *INSANE*! WHY--?

I'LL TELL YOU WHY... THEY DIDN'T HAVE ANY FAITH IN OUR ABILITY TO WARD OFF A TAKEOVER! IT ALL BOILS DOWN TO A LACK OF FAITH IN THE COMPANY!

YES, WE HAVE TO PREPARE OURSELVES TO RESIST ANY POSSIBLE OFFER!

I SUPPOSE YOU'RE RIGHT. STILL, I CAN'T FOR THE LIFE OF ME FIGURE OUT WHY LUTHOR WOULD *WANT* TO TAKE US OVER. LEXCORP HAS SO MANY RESEARCH FACILITIES, WE'D DUPLICATE MUCH OF WHAT HE ALREADY HAS.

WLEX

I AGREE. SO THE QUESTION IS...

"... WHAT DO WE HAVE THAT HE WANTS?"

MR. LUTHOR!

WHAT ABOUT THE S.T.A.R. DEAL?

HAVE YOU GIVEN ANY MORE THOUGHT TO--?

WILL YOU ANNOUNCE SOON--?

LEXCORP

EASY, EASY.!!

MR. LUTHOR HAS NO FURTHER COMMENT AT THIS TIME!

LEX

EVERYONE BACK NOW, PLEASE!

LET'S HAVE SOME ROOM HERE.

TOO MUCH OPEN SPACE--

--INSIDE AND OUT! TOO MANY PLACES FOR SOME TWISTO WITH A GUN TO HIDE. THE BOSS USUALLY COMES AND GOES BY WAY OF THE PARKING GARAGE...

...I DON'T KNOW WHY HE HAS TO MAKE SUCH A BIG *SHOW* OF THINGS TODAY!

THAT WILL BE ALL FOR NOW, BOYS.

YES, SIR!

HEY, ISN'T THAT--?

LOOK AT THEM MILLING AROUND DOWN THERE. THEY *ALL* WANT TO KNOW WHAT I'M DOING...

...AS WELL THEY SHOULD!

TWENTY-SEVEN STORIES ABOVE...
A CAR'S STOPPING ON THIS LEVEL! GO TO YELLOW ALERT.
REEP REEP REEP
YOU MAY STAND DOWN. THE CODEWORD IS "EAGLE!"
VOICEPRINT CHECKS. SORRY FOR THE INCONVENIENCE, SIR.
YOU'RE DOING WHAT YOU'RE PAID FOR. I'D EXPECT NO LESS.
KELLEY... HADDERSEN... HOW'S OUR PATIENT TODAY?
WE'VE MANAGED TO KEEP HIM FROM DEVELOPING *BED SORES*, BUT HE NEVER REGAINS CONSCIOUSNESS FOR MORE THAN A FEW MOMENTS.
I KEEP TELLING *KELLEY* THAT SHE'S GOT TO REDUCE HIS *MEDICATION*.
AND I KEEP TELLING *HIM* THAT WE DON'T HAVE THAT OPTION. AM I RIGHT?
UNFORTUNATELY, YES. *BRAINIAC* IS TOO DANGEROUS FOR US TO ALLOW HIM FULL USE OF HIS FACULTIES.
BUT WE CAN'T POSSIBLY STUDY HIS *PSYCHOKINETIC POWERS* WHILE HE REMAINS IN A *STUPOR*!
THERE'S MORE TO THIS MAN THAN MENTAL POWERS... HIS MIND HOLDS SECRETS OF *ALIEN TECHNOLOGIES*... SECRETS *I* AIM TO UNRAVEL.
AND HOW DO YOU PROPOSE TO DO *THAT*, LEX?
AS SOON AS IT IS MINE, WE'LL TRANSFER BRAINIAC THERE. *THEN* WE'LL BE ABLE TO PUT HIM TO USE!
S.T.A.R. LABS HAS A NEW *PSIONICS FACILITY* IN COLORADO.

I'M LAWRENCE WILCOX FOR BUSINESSLINE... THE RUMORED TAKEOVER OF S.T.A.R. LABS BY LEXCORP... HOW WILL IT AFFECT US? WE'RE PUTTING THAT QUESTION TO THE PEOPLE OF METROPOLIS...

IT'LL AFFECT ME A LOT! I HAVE SHARES OF S.T.A.R. IN MY PORTFOLIO. IF THE RUMOR IS TRUE, I'LL NEED SOME NEW TAX WRITE-OFFS!

THE MAGNITUDE OF MONEY INVOLVED IS A BIT FRIGHTENING. STILL, MY CHURCH DOES HAVE INVESTMENTS IN BOTH S.T.A.R. AND LEXCORP, SO...

LEXCORP'S BUYING S.T.A.R.? NO KIDDIN'? WHAT THE HEY... IF LUTHOR CAN AFFORD IT, MORE POWER TO 'IM!

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT ALL OF THESE TAKEOVERS. THEY COST BILLIONS, RIGHT? WELL, WHERE DOES ALL THE MONEY COME FROM?

THESE BUY-OUTS ARE AN OUTRAGE! A FEW MEN MAKE FORTUNES BY MOVING PAPER AROUND, AND NOTHING IS PRODUCED EXCEPT MOUNTAINS OF DEBT!

S.T.A.R. LABS, HUH? I DON'T KNOW... DO THEY PUT ON THAT SHOW THAT ED McMAHON HOSTS?

ALL THE MONEY SPENT ON THESE TAKEOVERS... IT'S JUST NOT RIGHT! NOT WHEN MILLIONS OF PEOPLE GO TO BED HUNGRY... IF THEY HAVE A BED.

AS LONG AS NO LAWS ARE BROKEN, I SEE NOTHING WRONG WITH IT. I'M ALL FOR COMPANIES INVESTING IN RESEARCH.

THESE ÷BLEEP÷ING CORPORATIONS ÷BLEEP÷! THEY'RE FULL'A FAT ÷BLEEP÷S WITH STEAK SAUCE ON THEIR BREATH... LIKE YOU! YEAH, YOU, WILCOX...

"... THE MEDIA IS THE WORST! YOUR BOSSES SIT IN THEIR ÷BLEEP÷ING CORPORATE TOWERS, PRETENDING TO CARE ABOUT THE PUBLIC.

"BUT ALL THEY REALLY CARE ABOUT IS THE ÷BLEEP÷ING BOTTOM LINE!"

LOOK, I DON'T CARE WHAT IT TAKES, BUY ALL THE SHARES OF S.T.A.R. YOU CAN GET YOUR HANDS ON...

... HALF FOR GALAXY COMMUNICATIONS, HALF FOR ME PERSONALLY. JUST DO IT! GOOD-BYE!

÷BZZZT÷ MR. EDGE? WE JUST GOT A CALL THAT THE LEXCORP NEWS CONFERENCE IS ABOUT TO START. THE GBS NEWS DIVISION IS SENDING UP A LIVE FEED, AS PER YOUR REQUEST.

THANK YOU, MISS CONWAY. HOLD ALL MY CALLS!

... MS. CAROLINE ABERNATHY, SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF THE LEXCORP GROUP.

WE WOULD LIKE TO PUT AN END TO THE PAST WEEK'S SPECULATION--

TELL ME WHAT I WANT TO HEAR, BABE.

--AND ANNOUNCE THAT LEXCORP WILL BE OFFERING $60 A SHARE FOR ANY AND ALL S.T.A.R. LABS STOCK.

YES! HAH-HA! MY TIP WAS RIGHT ON THE MONEY!

NOW THE FAT MAN WILL HAVE TO PAY ME PLENTY FOR MY SHARES!

I LOVE IT!

THE PRICE OF SHARES IN S.T.A.R. IS AGAIN SURGING ON THE METROPOLIS EXCHANGE...

LEXCORP VS S.T.A.R.

TURN THAT THING OFF!

I TOLD YOU IT WOULD COME TO THIS!

WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

WHAT CAN WE DO?

HOLD IT DOWN, WILL YOU?

I SAY WE SWALLOW THE PILL!

THAT'S INSANE!

YOU HAVE A BETTER IDEA?

ALL RIGHT, LET'S HAVE SOME ORDER! WE NEED IDEAS, NOT BABBLE!

HERE'S SOMETHING! I'VE JUST LEARNED WHAT LUTHOR IS AFTER--OUR ROCKY MOUNTAIN FACILITY.

THE PSIONICS RESEARCH CENTER? WHY WOULD HE WANT THAT?

MAYBE HE THINKS HE CAN FIND A WAY TO READ HIS COMPETITORS' MINDS! WHO KNOWS...

...WHO CARES?! HALF OF MY STAFF IS READY TO WALK! WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?!

WELL, WE CAN TRY TO FIGHT OFF THE SHARK AND CHANCE BEING DEVOURED... OR WE CAN SACRIFICE AN ARM AND TRY TO GET AWAY.

S.T.A.R. LABS HAS ANNOUNCED THE ISSUANCE OF THOUSANDS OF NEW SHARES OF STOCK, TO BE MADE AVAILABLE TO SHAREHOLDERS.

LEXCORP VS S.T.A.R.

THIS SO-CALLED "POISON PILL" MANEUVER IS OBVIOUSLY INTENDED TO STOP THE LEXCORP TAKEOVER.

S.T.A.R. BOARD CHAIRMAN ALTON STUART ALSO ANNOUNCED THE SALE OF A SPECIALTY LAB FACILITY TO THE SIMTECH CORPORATION.

THIS SALE SHOULD ENABLE S.T.A.R. TO RAISE CAPITAL NEEDED TO KEEP CONTROL OF ITS NEW SHARES.

YOU'RE TAKING THIS AWFULLY WELL, SIR...

...I THOUGHT THAT LAB WAS ONE OF THE THINGS THAT MOST ATTRACTED S.T.A.R. TO YOU.

IT WAS.

POIT

I ANTICIPATED SUCH A MANEUVER... SHORT OF CAPITULATING, IT WAS REALLY THE ONLY THING STUART COULD HAVE DONE...

WELL, THEN... BUYING S.T.A.R. NOW WON'T GET YOU THAT LAB... AND THE COST OF A BUY-OUT HAS JUST BALLOONED! I WOULD THINK THIS IS A TERRIBLE SETBACK FOR YOU!

NOT AT ALL, MY DEAR ABERNA... CAROLINE! AND, PLEASE... CALL ME "LEX"!

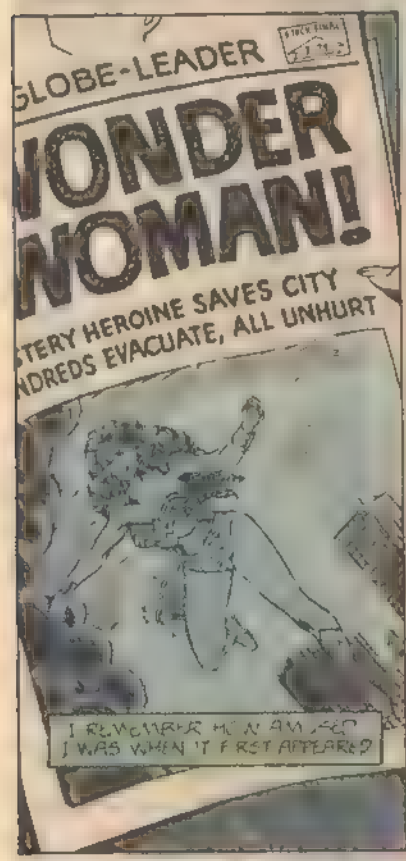
...AND I AM ALWAYS PLEASED WHEN THINGS GO AS I ANTICIPATE!

A TOAST, THEN... TO TWISTS AND TURNS... AND ULTIMATE VICTORY!

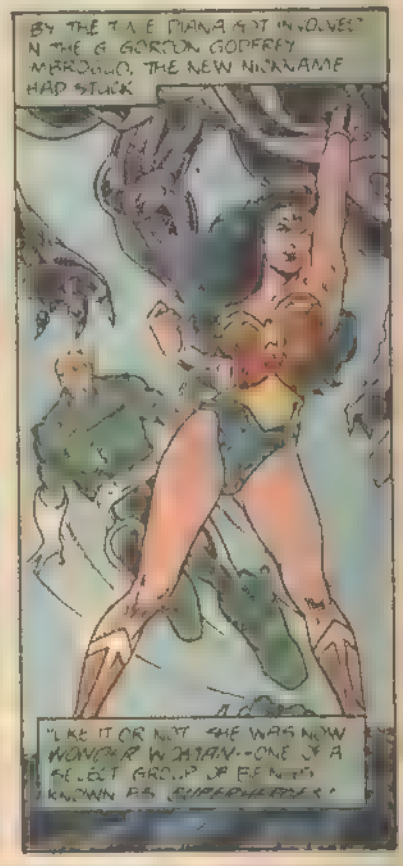
TO BE CONCLUDED NEXT WEEK... IN ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN #454!

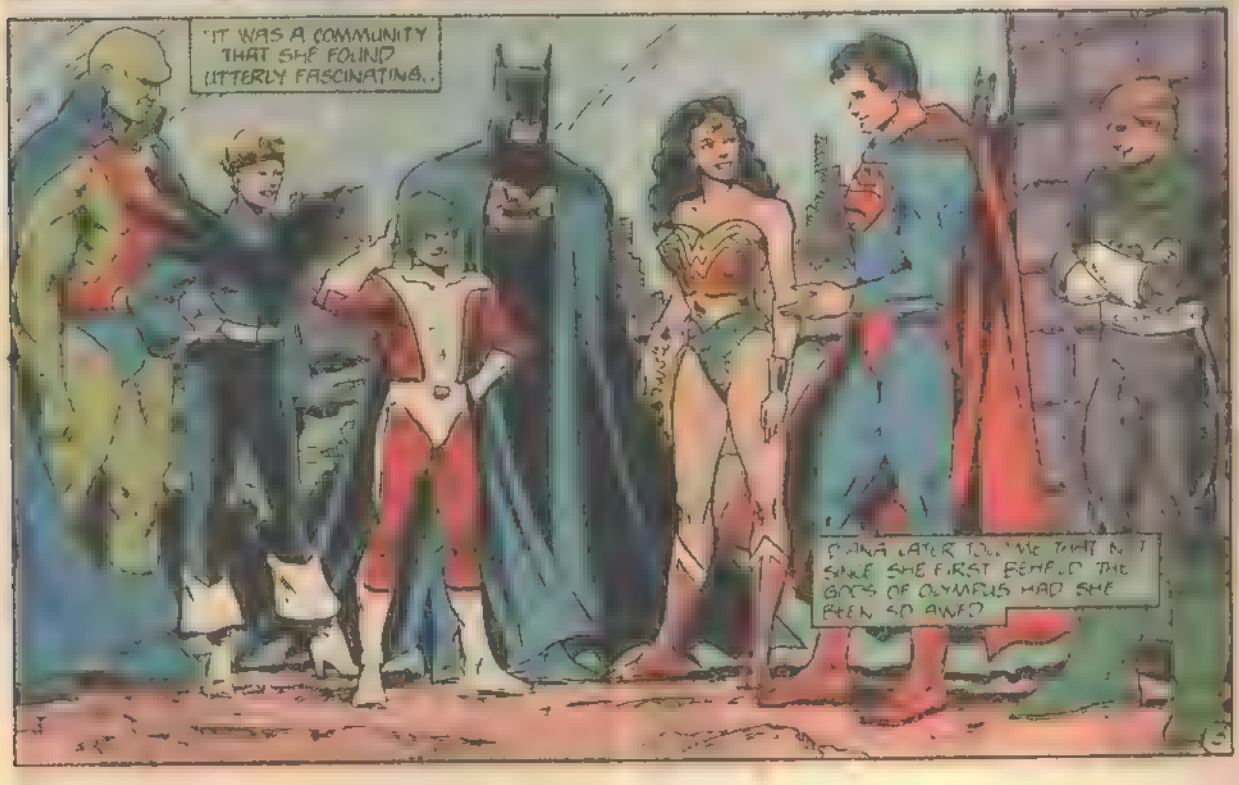
Wonder Woman HEADLINE

ILLUSTRATED BY CYNTHIA MARTIN
LETTERED BY CARRIE SPIEGLE
COLORED BY TATJANA WOOD


GLOBE-LEADER
WONDER WOMAN!
STERY HEROINE SAVES CITY
NDREDS EVACUATE, ALL UNHURT
I REMEMBER HOW AMAZED I WAS WHEN IT FIRST APPEARED!

CAROL BENNETT, THE GLOBE LEADER'S CITY EDITOR HAD ASSUMED THAT THE EMBLEM ON DIANA'S BODICE WERE INITIALS...
"...SIGNIFYING A CODE NAME-- LIKE SUPERMAN'S DIAMOND FRAMED "S."


BY THE TIME DIANA GOT INVOLVED IN THE G. GORDON GODFREY MURDER, THE NEW NICKNAME HAD STUCK
"LIKE IT OR NOT SHE WAS NOW WONDER WOMAN--ONE OF A SELECT GROUP OF BEINGS KNOWN AS SUPERHUMANS."


"IT WAS A COMMUNITY THAT SHE FOUND UTTERLY FASCINATING..
DIANA LATER TOLD ME THAT NOT SINCE SHE FIRST BEHELD THE GODS OF OLYMPUS HAD SHE BEEN SO AWED

"SHE AND BLACK CANARY
"THEY WOULD LEARN A LOT FROM EACH OTHER
"DIANA SPOKE FOR HOURS ABOUT THAT MEETING WITH THE SUPER HEROES
"ON AND ON SHE WOULD TALK ABOUT ALL OF THEM --EVEN THE OBNOXIOUS GUY GARDNER.
BUT SUPERMAN--SHE DIDN'T SPEAK MUCH ABOUT HIM
"THESE SENSATIONS WERE ALL SO NEW FOR DIANA
"IF ONLY MYNDI HADN'T EXPLOITED THEM."
"I KNOW, JULIA, BUT YOU WERE THE ONE WHO WANTED TO MAKE DIANA A FIGURE
DAILY PLANET
WWIII
DAILY PLANET
WOTTA WOMAN
AND NO ONE COULD DO THAT BETTER THAN MYNDI MAYER.
BUT LIKE ANYONE IN THE PUBLIC EYE, DIANA WAS BOUND TO EXPERIENCE HER FAIR SHARE OF GOSSIP AND INNUENDO
I DON'T LIKE READING THOSE HEADLINES EITHER, PARTICULARLY IN THAT SLEAZY GLOBE RAG...
BUT JULIA, TO MYNDI ANY PUBLICITY WAS BETTER THAN NONE.
BOSTON GLOBE
SUPERMAN AND WONDER WOMAN?
AS LONG AS NO ONE WAS HURT BY IT.
"I GUESS THAT DEPENDS ON HOW YOU DEFINE 'HURT', CHRISSIE.
I HAD ASSUMED THAT THE WHOLE SUPERMAN MATTER WAS CLOSED. AT A FEW MINUTES AGO, WHEN I SAW THAT SAME TABLOID ON DIANA'S DESK
DIANA MAYBE YOU SHOULD GO TALK WITH SUPERMAN
I MEAN IF THOSE RUMORS ARE STILL BOTHERING YOU, THEN MAYBE YOU AND HE SHOULD GET TOGETHER AND.
WE ALREADY HAVE, JULIA. I MET WITH SUPERMAN A FEW WEEKS AGO.
YOU DID? BUT YOU NEVER TOLD ME..
SUPERMAN WONDER WOMAN
BOSTON GLOBE
7

I KNOW JULIA--BUT THIS WAS SOMETHING STRICTLY BETWEEN HIM AND ME
I MUST ADMIT--I WAS A LITTLE NERVOUS I WASN'T SURE HOW TO GREET HIM
MY MIND CALLED BACK OUR FIRST RENDEZVOUS--AND THAT FIRST KISS I WAS SO UNPREPARED
"I DIDN'T WANT HIM TO MISINTERPRET MY DESIRE TO MEET WITH HIM AGAIN
WE JUST STARED AT EACH OTHER AWKWARDLY FOR A FEELING ETERNITY
"BUT FINALLY WE SHARED SMILES AND OFFERED EACH OTHER OUR HAND
HI DIANA UMM--LONG TIME NO SEE
HELLO, CLARK IT HAS BEEN TOO LONG A TIME.
I'VE NEVER BEEN IN METRO PARK BEFORE IT'S BEAUTIFUL.
I CAN SEE WHY YOU METROPOLITANS ARE SO PROUD OF IT.
OH YEAH IT'S NOT BAD..I GUESS.
CLARK, DO YOU REALIZE THAT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME WE HAVE MET SOCIALLY SINCE THAT TIME IN SMALLVILLE?
IT IS? WELL, LET'S HOPE DARKSEID DOESN'T INTEND TO RAIN ON OUR PARADE THIS TIME.*
* CLARK AND DIANA FIRST REAPPEARED TO THE EVENTS IN ACTION COMICS #600--KAREN
CLARK, I WANT TO ASK YOU A SERIOUS QUESTION AND PLEASE, DON'T BE AFRAID OF HURTING MY FEELINGS.
DO YOU RESENT ME FOR THE WAY THAT "FIRST DATE" TURNED OUT?
YOU SAID THAT WE WOULD REMAIN FRIENDS--YET YOU NEVER RETURN MY PHONE CALLS
IF I'VE OFFENDED YOU IN ANY WAY, I'M SINCERELY SORR--
OH GOD, DIANA, I'M THE ONE WHO SHOULD APOLOGIZE--
I'VE JUST HAD SO MANY THINGS ON MY MIND LATELY--
I GUESS I JUST LET THE TIME ZOOM BY
5

"SUPERMAN WAS AS GALLANT AS ALWAYS, BUT, ALTHOUGH I WAS RELIEVED BY HIS WORDS, I COULD SEE IN HIS FACE THAT A GREAT WEIGHT BURDENED HIS MAGNIFICENT SHOULDERS
CLARK, IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO TO HELP.
THANKS, DIANA, BUT IT'S PRETTY MUCH MY MESS TO CLEAN UP.
BUT, I JUST WANT TO SAY THAT I HAVE THOUGHT OF YOU THERE ARE FEW PEOPLE WHOM I RESPECT MORE.
IN A WAY, I SUPPOSE THAT I WAS STILL A LITTLE EMBARRASSED BY THE WAY I...WELL...
OH, CLARK--WE WERE BOTH CAUGHT IN A VERY DISCONCERTING SITUATION. I THINK WE BOTH REALIZED--THEN AND THERE--THAT WE HAD EACH BECOME INFATUATED WITH THE WRONG PERSON.
WHEN I FIRST MET YOU, I IMAGINED YOU WERE A GOD--OR THE CLOSEST THING TO OLYMPUS I HAD EVER ENCOUNTERED ON PATRIARCH'S WORLD.
SO BLINDED WAS I BY THAT MISCONCEPTION THAT I NEGLECTED TO SEE THE ACTUAL MAN WHO EXISTED BENEATH THAT BRIGHT RED CAPE.
MUST'VE BEEN QUITE A DISAPPOINTMENT FOR YOU
I'M ASHAMED TO ADMIT THAT INITIALLY IT WAS. BUT THAT WAS MY FAILING, NOT YOURS. I'M SORRY IF I HAD MISLED YOU, BUT SUCH EMOTIONS WERE SO NEW TO ME THEN
HEY--I'D BEEN DATING FOR YEARS, AND I STILL MAKE MY SHARE OF BLUNDERS
YOU SEE, FOR ME IT WAS THE REVERSE. I THOUGHT OF YOU AS JUST ANOTHER SUPERHERO--LIKE ME
BUT YOU ENDED UP BEING SO MUCH *MORE*--ALMOST LIKE A GODDESS--AND, WELL, I GUESS I JUST FELT A LITTLE OUTCLASSED
NO, CLARK. THAT YOU NEED NEVER FEEL.
THERE ARE FEW PERSONS WHOM I RESPECT MORE--AND WHOSE FRIENDSHIP I SO DEEPLY TREASURE.
BUT, CLARK, IF THIS FRIENDSHIP IS TO CONTINUE, WE MUST FIRST BE HONEST WITH EACH OTHER.
THESE NEWSPAPER ARTICLES ABOUT OUR SUPPOSED ROMANCE--I'M SORRY IF THEY HAVE PERPLEXED YOU...
YOU MEAN THE RECENT ONES THAT SAY YOU DUMPED ME FOR HERMES?
DIANA, I'M A REPORTER. I KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN JOURNALISM AND SENSATIONALISTIC GOSSIP.
REMEMBER--THEY CALL ME THE MAN OF *STEEL*. THAT MEANS I HAVE A PRETTY THICK SKIN

"NOW IT WAS I WHO FELT EMBARRASSED. ALL THIS TIME I HAD ASSUMED THAT THE MEDIA REPORTS HAD BOTHERED HIM AS MUCH AS THEY HAD ME
THE ONLY THING I COULD DO-- I CHANGED THE SUBJECT
WONDER WOMAN

REALLY? WELL, YOU ONCE TOLD ME THAT YOU WANTED TO STUDY THE SUPERHERO GAME UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL. THIS SEEMS LIKE THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY
BETTER WATCH OUT, THOUGH. I HEAR IT CAN GET PRETTY
EH?
CLARK-- IS SOMETHING WRONG?

I HAVE TO FLY. CAN YOU STAND WATCH?
OF CERTAINLY
IS THIS A NORMAL THING FOR YOU?
JUST PART OF BEING A SUPERHERO

BY A FRIEND'S
"HE SEEMED ALMOST RELIEVED TO HEAR IT."

I NEVER DID FIND OUT WHAT WAS BOTHERING HIM THEN--
--AND NOW, I FEEL SO GUILTY ABOUT IT.
SWEETIE SUPERMAN IS A BIG BOY. HE COULD HAVE TOLD YOU IF HE WANTED TO.
I KNOW LOIS, BUT

PLANET
WHERE IS SUPERMA

THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN®

Created by JERRY SIEGEL & JOE SHUSTER

WAYFARER™

< HE HAS BEEN SO STILL, SO QUIET, SINCE HE WAS THROWN IN WITH US...?

< I KNOW HE IS NOT DEAD. I "SEE" IMAGES IN HIS MIND-- HE LIVES--HE DREAMS-- IT IS WONDERFUL.?

< WHY TREAD LIGHTLY AROUND THIS ONE? IT IS LIFELESS. OUR JAILER WAS OVERHEARD TO SAY THAT IT WAS FOUND DRIFTING!?

< IT COULDN'T HAVE SURVIVED DEEP SPACE CLOTHED AS IT IS!?

< TRUTH, I HEAR, FELIDAEUS. START, I SHALL. THE CLOAK--MINE IT MUST BE!?

< I AM TERRAPIN OF CHELONIA, AN OBSERVER ON THIS VESSEL. WE ARE ALL SLAVES, BOUND FOR AUCTION.?

< MY CONSOLATION IS THAT I WILL BE COVETED FOR MY TELEPATHIC ABILITIES, WHILE THE OTHERS WILL END UP FODDER FOR THE LABOR CAMPS.?

< THEIR SIMPLE MINDS OFFER ME NO DIVERSION, BUT THIS NEW ONE, THE DRIFTER, IS EXQUISITELY INTELLIGENT.?

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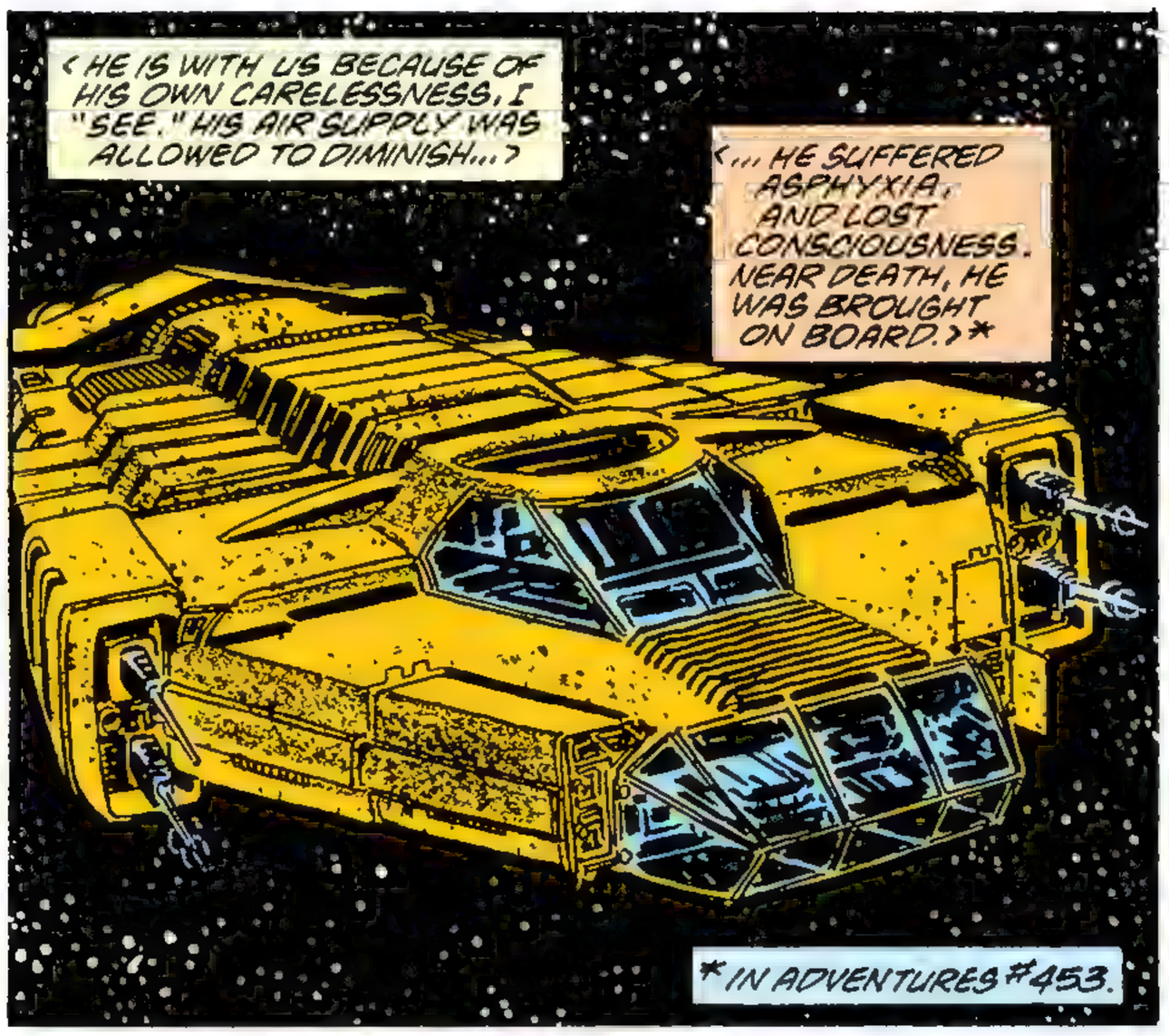
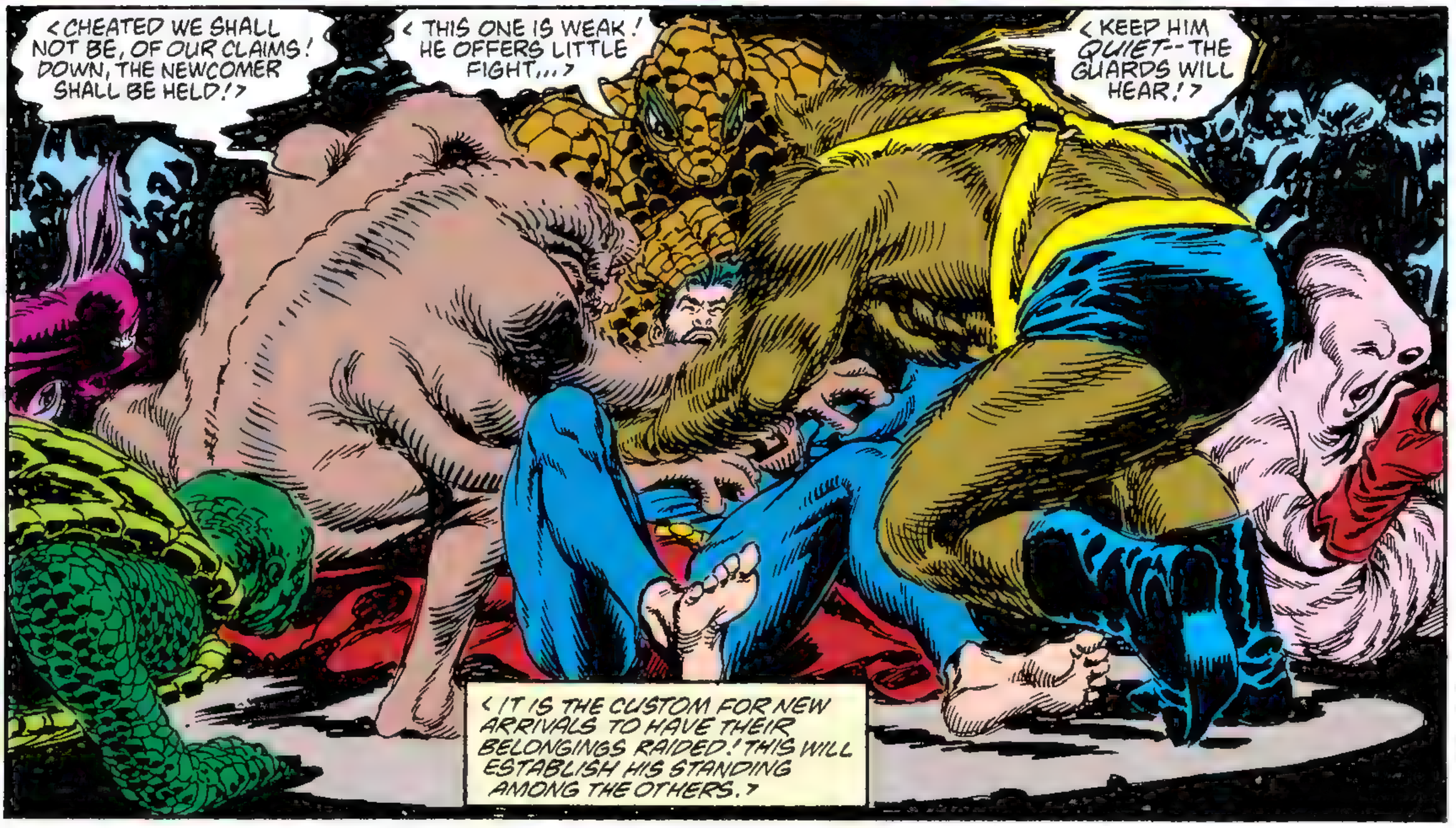

< HE IS WITH US BECAUSE OF HIS OWN CARELESSNESS. I "SEE." HIS AIR SUPPLY WAS ALLOWED TO DIMINISH... >
< ... HE SUFFERED ASPHYXIA, AND LOST CONSCIOUSNESS. NEAR DEATH, HE WAS BROUGHT ON BOARD. >*
* IN ADVENTURES #453.

< HIS MIND HOLDS MANY GRAND IMAGES -- I FEAR HE WOULD NOT BE A GOOD SLAVE... >
< TURN THE DRIFTER OVER -- I WILL HAVE HIS BRIGHTLY HUED TUNIC! >

÷UHHNN÷ WHERE AM I? WHAT ARE YOU DOING? GET AWAY!
< HE LIVES? >

< NO MATTER -- I HAVE CLAIMED MY PRIZE! >
HEY! GIVE ME BACK MY BOOTS!


< CHEATED WE SHALL NOT BE, OF OUR CLAIMS! DOWN, THE NEWCOMER SHALL BE HELD! >
< THIS ONE IS WEAK! HE OFFERS LITTLE FIGHT... >
< KEEP HIM QUIET -- THE GUARDS WILL HEAR! >
< IT IS THE CUSTOM FOR NEW ARRIVALS TO HAVE THEIR BELONGINGS RAIDED! THIS WILL ESTABLISH HIS STANDING AMONG THE OTHERS. >

<HE MUST FIGHT FOR HIS POSSESSIONS--THE OTHERS RESPECT CONFRONTATION!>

<MINE, THE CLOAK IS! MINE!>

NO...

...THE CLOAK...IS MINE!!

<AIEEEE! BURNING, AM I! BURNING!>

<HIS EYES--THE HEAT COMES FROM HIS EYES!>

<OH OH! FIGHTING BACK, HE IS NOT SUPPOSED TO!>

THWACK!

GET OFF OF ME!

I SAID...

GET OFF!

<HIS AGGRESSION WILL KEEP MOST OF THE OTHERS FROM ENGAGING HIM AGAIN...>

WHAM!!!

<...BUT IT ONLY PROVOKES FELIDAEUS!>

<WE WRONGLY JUDGED THE DRIFTER!>

<ONLY WITH FELIDAEUS, IS HIS FIGHT!>

<HIS ENERGIES ARE AT AN EBB, AND HE MUST PUT ALL INTO THIS IMPACT!>

KERACK!

<STOP! IT'S THE CELLKEEP!>

STAND CLEAR OF THE ENTRANCEWAY, OR FACE THE PROD!>

<NOTHING, WE HAVE DONE!>

<BREAK IT UP, YOU TWO! YOU'VE EARNED THE CUFFS!>

<I "SEE" THE GUARDS ARE PLEASED TO FIND SOME ACTIVITY IN OUR CELL. THEY HAVE PLANS FOR THE TWO COMBATANTS...>

I WAS A FOOL WASTING MY STRENGTH LIKE THAT-- NOW I'M TOO WEAK TO BREAK FREE!

<THE DRIFTER AND FELIDAEUS ARE BEING ISOLATED INTO A SEPARATE GROUP...>

<MOVE ON!>

<THE CELLKEEPS' THOUGHTS TELL ME THAT THEIR GROUP IS DESTINED FOR SOMETHING CALLED "THE GAMES>

<THE DESTINATION--WARWORLD! I FEAR I WILL NEVER TOUCH THE DRIFTER'S INTERESTING MIND AGAIN...>

"WHERE IS SUPERMAN? THAT QUESTION IS STILL ON EVERYONE'S MIND, THOUGH NO LONGER FRONT PAGE NEWS."

"IT'S BEEN RELEGATED TO THE INSIDE, ALONG WITH STORIES OF REBUILDING METROPOLIS AFTER THE THANAGARIAN ATTACK!"*

"THE HEADLINES FAVOR LEX LUTHOR, MY FORMER BOSS, FOR SAVING THE CITY FROM A MENACE WHOSE NAME I CAN'T PRONOUNCE..."**

"...AND FOR THROWING WALLSTREET INTO A FRENZY OVER HIS INTEREST IN S.T.A.R. LABS!"

"MY INTEREST IS IN THE STORY BY TOBY RAYNES, CLAIMING THE CONTRACT HIT ON CLARK KENT WAS BOTCHED, THAT AN INNOCENT MAN WAS KILLED IN HIS PLACE."

*IN SUPERMAN #26/**IN #31

I *KNEW* THE INNOCENT MAN, AND I INADVERTENTLY SENT HIM TO KENT'S PLACE THE NIGHT HE DIED!

I HIRED HIM TO HELP ME *PROVE* CLARK KENT WAS SUPERMAN!

DAILY ★ STAR

Metropolis Saved from malevolent menace

Lex Luthor repels "Mr. Mxyzptlk"

Lexcorp announces intention to acquire

BEATTY TIRE

Meek's COPY CENTER

I TOLD HIM *NOT* TO BREAK IN, BUT HE APPARENTLY DID, ANYWAY!

NOW HE'S DEAD, BECAUSE HE GOT CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE BETWEEN THE REPORTER AND *INTERGANG* OVER SOME NEWS ARTICLES.

AND I GUESS I GOT MY *PROOF* WHEN BOTH *KENT* AND *SUPERMAN* DISAPPEARED!

"IT'S TIME TO FACE FACTS AND TELL THE POLICE WHO IT WAS THAT WAS KILLED ON THAT RAINY NIGHT!"

LOOK, MAGGIE, IF THEY'RE WORRIED ABOUT HIS SAFETY, I'LL GO TO SMALLVILLE AND "BABYSIT" HIM BACK HERE!

POLICE PRECINCT

I CAN'T BLAME HIS FOLKS FOR WORRYING BECAUSE IT'S A SURE THING SOMEONE'S GUNNING FOR HIM, BUT I'LL CONSIDER IT, DAN.

GREAT, NOW I'D BETTER GET BACK ON THE STREETS!

IT'S CRAZY, BUT SINCE SUPERMAN'S BEEN GONE, EVERY TWO-BIT SUPERVILLAIN HAS COME OUT OF THE WOODWORK!

Capt. Sawyer

HATE TO ASK YOU TO PULL A NIGHT SHIFT AGAIN, BUT...

I VOLUNTEERED BEFORE YOU COULD ASK!

SEE YA LATER.

YOU'RE A SWEETHEART, "TERRIBLE" TURPIN!

RI-ING

SPECIAL CRIMES UNIT, MAGGIE SAWYER SPEAKING.

I UNDERSTAND YOU'RE IN CHARGE OF THE INVESTIGATION OF THE MURDER AT 344 CLINTON-- THE REPORTER'S APARTMENT?

I HAVE *INFORMATION* ON THE VICTIM-- I KNOW HIS BODY HASN'T BEEN IDENTIFIED...

HIS NAME WAS *MATTHEW STOCKTON*, AND HE WAS A PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR HIRED TO WATCH KENT'S APARTMENT!

LOOK, MISS-- WHY HAVEN'T YOU COME FORWARD BEFORE NOW?

WITHHOLDING INFORMATION FROM A MURDER INVESTIGATION IS *SERIOUS* STUFF...

I'VE DONE NOTHING WRONG-- JUST LISTEN TO ME FOR NOW. HIS OFFICE IS IN THE TISHMAN BUILDING, OFFICE 416.

CHECK ON WHAT I'VE GIVEN YOU-- I'LL TURN MYSELF IN AFTER I'VE SORTED SOME THINGS OUT. GOODBYE!

HMMMM. STRANGE-- WELL, MAYBE THIS BIT OF INFORMATION WILL LEAD US CLOSER TO NAILING THE KILLERS!

I THINK I'VE JUST OPENED UP A CAN OF WORMS HERE! I'D BETTER TAKE A LAWYER WITH ME WHEN I TALK TO HER NEXT TIME...

"NO TELLING WHAT KIND OF TROUBLE I'VE GOTTEN MYSELF INTO..."

UH-OH. MISTER EDGE IS STILL WEARING HIS "BOO-BOO" FACE!

NO SMILE FOR ME? YOU'RE OUT OF THE OFFICE, MORGAN! NOTHING BUT *FUN FUN FUN* IN THE COUNTRY WITH ME AND ADAM!

YOU OUGHT TO KNOW BY *NOW* THAT I *AM* GALAXY COMMUNICATIONS, BABY!

I *CAN'T* SHUT MY BRAIN *OFF* THE SECOND I'M OUT OF THE DOOR!

YOU'RE MAD--I DIDN'T MEAN TO TEASE YOU, I--

NO, CAT. LOOK, IT'S JUST THAT I'VE HAD A LOT OF *PROBLEMS* TO DEAL WITH LATELY. YOU'VE BEEN THE *ONE* BRIGHT SPOT FOR ME.

THERE'S SO MUCH GOING ON WITH GALAXY THAT YOUR PRETTY LITTLE BRAIN COULDN'T UNDERSTAND...

TRY ME.

AHHHH--IT'S THOSE NEWSPAPER STORIES IN THE DAILY PLANET. THE ONES ON *INTERGANG*, BY CLARK KENT.

WHO WAS HIS *SOURCE*?

HOW IS IT THAT THESE STORIES CONTINUE TO APPEAR EVEN AFTER HIS *DEATH*?

GALAXY HAS DONE NOTHING WRONG, MIND YOU--I'D JUST LIKE TO EXPOSE WHOEVER'S BEEN TELLING THESE *TALL TALES* ABOUT US!

SAY, YOU *COULD* HELP ME! YOU'RE *STILL* WRITING THAT COLUMN FOR THE PLANET...

USE YOUR CONNECTIONS--ASK AROUND, FIND OUT WHO KENT WAS WORKING WITH...

OH, MORGAN, I DON'T THINK-- LOOK OUT! THE RACCOON!

I WOULDN'T THINK OF ASKING YOU TO SPY! JUST KEEP THOSE GOSSIP-COLUMNIST EARS OF YOURS CLOSE TO THE GROUND...

THUMP!

OH-MY-GOD--YOU DELIBERATELY RAN IT DOWN!

YUUUUUCH! GR-ROSS!

I DON'T BRAKE FOR ANIMALS, YOU BABIES!

OHHH. LOOK, LET'S JUST CHANGE THE SUBJECT.

PUT THE RADIO ON-- AND NONE OF THAT OLDIES MUSIC!

ADAM!

CUTE, KID.

CLICK!

...AT WAS R.E.M.'S "STAND." NEXT UP IS NEWS ON THE HOUR WITH PAUL KELLY. THANKS, "MAGIC". LEADING OFF IS THE NEWS THAT REPORTER CLARK KENT IS ALIVE...

THAT REVELATION IS PART OF A COPYRIGHTED STORY IN TODAY'S DAILY STAR.

KENT HAS BEEN IN HIDING SINCE HIS CONTROVERSIAL EXPOSE SERIES ON INTERGANG BEGAN APPEARING IN THE DAILY PLANET.

I DON'T BELIEVE IT! THAT ANSWERS ONE OF MY QUESTIONS.

WELL, BABE, I'M ELEVATING THAT FAVOR TO AN EMPLOYER'S REQUEST...

22
EXIT 43
CAMPBELL AVENUE

"TALK TO YOUR FRIENDS AT THE PLANET, AND FIND OUT WHERE KENT IS HIDING!"

MAGGIE SAWYER SAYS SHE'LL ARRANGE FOR SOMEONE TO ESCORT "CLARK" BACK TO METROPOLIS, JONATHAN.

IT'S TOO RISKY, MARTHA. MATRIX MAY HAVE ALTERED HERSELF TO LOOK LIKE OUR CLARK...*

*IN ADVENTURES #453

...BUT SHE COULD NEVER PASS HERSELF OFF AS HIM IN A CONVERSATION.

SHE DOESN'T HAVE FULL COMMAND OF LANGUAGE SKILLS, NOR DOES SHE HAVE HIS MEMORIES, 'CEPT FOR WHAT WE'VE TOLD HER.

FIBBING IS BAD, PA. THAT'S HOW ALL THIS GOT STARTED!

WELL, WHAT'S DONE IS DONE. MEANTIME, WE'D BETTER KEEP AN EYE ON HER!

LANA BROUGHT HER SOME MORE LIBRARY BOOKS. I'LL GO TRY TO CONVINCE HER TO CHANGE HERSELF BACK!

SHE SHOULD *KNOW* WE LIKED HER THE WAY SHE WAS--TURNING INTO A VERY PRETTY GIRL BEFORE SHE STARTED *THIS* NONSENSE!

MAE, DEAR. I'VE GOT SOME MORE READING MATERIAL FOR--

PA! COME UP HERE QUICK...

"SHE'S GONE, AND SHE'S TAKEN SOME OF CLARK'S THINGS WITH HER!"

HOBBY BAR GRILL

POOL BILLIARDS

THIS ONE LOOKS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE--GOTTA BE FROM OUTTA TOWN!

HOLD IT THERE, FOUR-EYES! CARE TO DONATE SOME CASH TO THE LITTLE LEAGUE?

I DON'T UNDERSTAND. I HAVE ONLY TWO EYES--IS THIS A JOKE?

JOKE'S OVER, CHUMP! ME AND MY PAL ARE GONNA SEARCH YOU...

...ANYTHIN' WE FINDS, WE KEEPS!

I CAN SEE HE'S GOING TO MAKE IT TOUGH ON HIMSELF, 'BERT!

TIME TO PLAY "HOME RUN"...

TOUGH? YOU GUYS THINK YER TOUGH?

YER JUST A COUPLA JOOVEENILE DEELINKWENTS!

NOW, ME--I'M TOUGH! YA GOTTA BE, TO GO THE DISTANCE WIT' THE BIG RED "S".

SUPERMAN'S Pal

WHAT'S THIS ? A WINO-HERO ?

PUT AN EGG IN YOUR SHOE AND SCRAMBLE, OLD TIMER !

TAKE YER BEST SHOT, SQUIRT !

OKAY, YOU DOPE !

'BUST GUERRA STEPS UP TO THE PLATE -- THE CROWD GOES WILD !

CRACK !

OH, BABY ! HE GOT GOOD WOOD ON THAT ONE -- IT'S GOING, GOING, GONE !

THE CROWD IS ON THEIR FEET ! I TELL YOU -- WAS THAT A HOME RUN OR WAS THAT A HOME --

RUN !!

UH-OH...

I THINK I HEAR MY MAMMA CALLING...

NO, NO ONE IS CALLING !

BIBBO'S SKULL IS PRETTY THICK ! NOW BIBBO COMES UP TO BAT !

C'MON, IT WAS A JOKE! LET ME GO!

I STILL DO NOT UNDERSTAND "FOUR-EYES"

WHERE'RE YOU FROM? IT MEANS YOU WEAR GLASSES!

DON'T TALK-- SOCK HIM--LIKE DIS!

FIRST I MUST REMOVE *THESE* SO I AM NOT *FUNNY*...

OUT COLD ALREADY? YER NOT MY FAV'RITE!

I AM NOW *TWO-EYES*-- IS THIS *FUNNY* TOO?

DAT WAS GOOD, PAL, BUT YOU AIN'T TOO SMART, ARE YA?

SAY, WITHOUT THE SPECS, YOU LOOK LIKE...

IT'S YOU! YOU WAS JUST ACTIN' DUMB!

AAARRROOOOO

MATRIX MUST GO NOW, 'BYE!

BOP! AROOO AROOO

THE COPPERS, EH? OOOOF!

WELL, WELL, BIBBO.

WHAT'S GONE DOWN HERE? THE ACE 'O CLUBS CLOSED?

MY FAV'RIT! HE'S BACK!

WHO?

"SUPERMAN. YOU DOPE!"

<WE ARE ABOUT TO LAND ON ONE OF WARWORLD'S ORBITING PLANETOIDS-- EVERYONE'S THOUGHTS ARE FILLED WITH FEAR...>

<...THE MASTERS AS WELL AS THE SLAVES! THEY ALL DREAD THIS PLACE>

<THE DRIFTER CONTINUES TO FIGHT THE GUARD'S PRODDING...>

<IF I COULD ONLY COMMUNICATE WITH HIM, INSTEAD OF MERELY READING HIS THOUGHTS-- TELL HIM TO SAVE HIS ENERGIES...>

<HE WILL NEED THEM--LATER, FOR WARWORLD'S RULER DEMANDS PAYMENT FOR PASSAGE THROUGH THIS SYSTEM...>

<THE MOST COMBATIVE SLAVES ARE SINGLED OUT...>

<DON'T LIKE THIS, DO YOU? YOU'VE GOT SPUNK!>

<HIS FIGHTING HAS BROUGHT HIM TO THEIR ATTENTION, HE IS AS GOOD AS DEAD!>

<I SURVIVE BECAUSE I ONLY WATCH AND LISTEN. I THREATEN NO ONE.>

<BRING HIM FORWARD!>

OOF!

< THE DRIFTER HAS BEEN NOTICED BY THE OVERLORD OF WARWORLD... THE EVIL MONGUL.!>

< MY ABILITIES CANNOT SCAN MONGUL'S MIND-- HIS THOUGHTS ARE SO DARK, I MIGHT NEVER FIND MY WAY OUT AGAIN...>

YES

< THIS ONE HAS THE FIRE OF A CHAMPION.!>

< THE DRIFTER WILL DIE IN AN ARENA OF BATTLE--AS AMUSEMENT FOR MONGUL AND HIS SUBJECTS.!>

CONTINUED IN ACTION® COMICS ANNUAL #2 IN A STORY BY GEORGE PEREZ, ROGER STERN, JERRY ORDWAY, CURT SWAN, BRETT BREEDING, JOHN STATEMA AND MIKE MIGNOLA!"

ON SALE IN TWO WEEKS!

PRESENTED BY: JERRY ORDWAY / WRITER ARTIST • ALBERT DE GUZMAN LETTERER • GLENN WHITMORE COLORIST • MIKE CARLIN EDITOR

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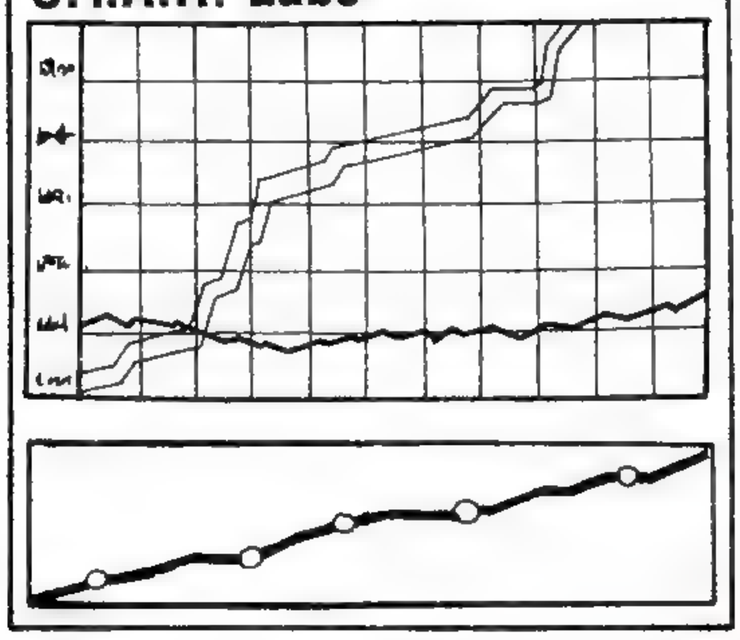
BusinessLook

DAILY PLANET
Friday
April 7, 1989
Section B

Stocklook

S.T.A.R. Labs



Looking for a White Knight

S.T.A.R. Labs tries desperately to stave off LexCorp

By Franklin W. Maynard

The battle for control of Scientific and Technological Advanced Research Laboratories has reached its eleventh hour with S.T.A.R. scrambling to find a White Knight to rescue them from the financial muscle of Lex Luthor. The question remains what company or investment consortium could possibly match the record-breaking multibillion offer of Luthor's multinational LexCorp Group.

An attempt last week by S.T.A.R.'s board of directors to thwart the takeover bid from Metropolis-based LexCorp by voting to issue thousands of new shares of stock—the so-called "Poison Pill" maneuver—has, by all accounts, been a dismal failure. LexCorp has stood firm on its offer of $60-a-share for any and all S.T.A.R. stock, and advisers close to Luthor have indicated a willingness on their C.E.O.'s part to offer an even higher bid, if necessary.

Continued on Page 2B

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Jurgens/Janke Junk Bond case goes before jury 4B

DeGuzman Calligraphics floats trial balloon 5B

Whitmore Color patents Chromalock system 5B

Ordster Work-O-Matic debuts. Strong sales predicted 6B

LEX LUTHOR . . . takeover bid described as "chicken feed" to magnate.

DON'T KNOW WHY YOU FOLKS ARE PUTTIN' IN SO MANY LATE HOURS... YOU CAN'T STOP OL' MAN LUTHOR.
JUST GIVE ME THE PIZZA, AND SPARE ME THE ADVICE, OKAY?
OUR BONDING AGENT THINKS WE SHOULD ACCEPT THE BID.
THEN IT'S TIME WE FOUND A NEW BONDING AGENT!
YES, MR. FOX, I REALIZE YOUR COMPANY DOESN'T DO MUCH BUSINESS IN METROPOLIS, BUT WE NEED YOUR HELP!
PIZZA

THE FIGURES DON'T LIE, MR. STUART-- EVEN WITH THE NEW STOCK ISSUE, WE CAN'T MAINTAIN CONTROL OF THE COMPANY.

TOO MANY SHAREHOLDERS ARE WILLING TO ACCEPT LUTHOR'S OFFER, AND WE CAN'T SUSTAIN THE DEBT NECESSARY TO TOP IT!

I KNOW, I *KNOW!* WE HAVE TO FIND AN ACCEPTABLE BUYER WHO *CAN!*

BAD NEWS, SIR... *WAYNE ENTERPRISES* ISN'T INTERESTED IN PLAYING WHITE KNIGHT.

DAYTON INDUSTRIES SEEMED INTERESTED AT FIRST, BUT NOW THEY'RE WAFFLING.

ISN'T THERE *ANYONE* LEFT WHO CAN STOP LUTHOR?

I DON'T KNOW WHAT ELSE TO DO! SUPPOSEDLY, LUTHOR WAS MOST INTERESTED IN OUR *PSIONICS RESEARCH CENTER*, BUT SELLING THAT OFF TO *SIMTECH* DIDN'T DISCOURAGE HIM ONE IOTA!

WELL, LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE, STUART--

--IF LUTHOR BUYS US OUT, THERE'LL BE *GOLDEN PARACHUTES* FOR ALL OF US. WE'LL MAKE OUT ALL RIGHT.

DURWOOD, I GOT INTO THIS BUSINESS TO SEE THAT SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH GOT THE FUNDING IT DESERVED. I'M NOT *READY* TO RETIRE... NOT YET!

AND ESPECIALLY NOT BECAUSE OF SOME LITTLE *TIN GOD--*

"--LIKE LEX LUTHOR!"

MR. LUTHOR, THE PUBLIC IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE NUMBER OF LEVERAGED BUY-OUTS IN RECENT YEARS!

AS WELL THEY *SHOULD* BE!

Wall Street Review

THE LEVEL OF CORPORATE DEBT IN THIS NATION IS *SCANDALOUS!*

MY BID FOR S.T.A.R. LABS, HOWEVER, IS *NOT* LEVERAGED.

LEXCORP ALREADY HAS THE NECESSARY CAPITAL ON HAND!

AND I ASSURE S.T.A.R. EMPLOYEES THAT THEY NEED NOT FEAR FOR THEIR JOBS. IN FACT, LEXCORP'S GENEROUS BENEFITS PACKAGE WILL BE EXTENDED TO COVER THEM.

THERE HAS BEEN MUCH SPECULATION AS TO WHY YOU'RE DOING THIS...

WHY? BECAUSE I BELIEVE IN ADVANCING THE THRESHOLD OF TECHNOLOGY. IMAGINE THE GREAT THINGS S.T.A.R. MIGHT ACHIEVE WITH LEXCORP'S BACKING--

--NON-POLLUTING POWER SOURCES... SPACE HABITATS. MAN COULD REACH THE STARS IN OUR LIFETIMES!

I'M SORRY, BUT WE'VE RUN OUT OF TIME! WE'D LIKE TO THANK LEX LUTHOR FOR JOINING US TODAY.

MY PLEASURE.

MR. L. THAT WAS *MAGNIFICENT!* YOU HAD THEM EATING OUT OF YOUR HAND!

THAT WAS THE INTENT, CAROLINE.

WHAT DID YOU CALL ME?

I'M SORRY... *LEX.*

THE PUBLIC, CAROLINE... WIN THEM OVER AND YOU'VE WON THE WAR! *ANY* WAR!

AND THE FASTEST WAY TO GRAB THE PUBLIC'S ATTENTION IS WITH *TELEVISION...*

"...IT'S AN EASILY SUBVERTED MEDIUM!"

MR. EDGE? MR. STUART AND MR. DURWOOD OF S.T.A.R. LABS ARE HERE TO SEE YOU, SIR!

WLEX

SHOW THEM IN, MISS CONWAY!

GENTLEMEN, WELCOME!

GOOD TO SEE YOU LOOKING SO FIT, ALTON--YOU SOUNDED HARRIED WHEN YOU CALLED EARLIER! WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?

YOU KNOW THAT WE'RE FIGHTING A TAKEOVER BID FROM LEXCORP--!

OF COURSE! IT'S BEEN WGBS'S LEAD STORY FOR WEEKS!

MORGAN, WE'D LIKE YOU TO PLAY WHITE KNIGHT!

YOU MUST BE JOKING!

EDGE, YOU'RE THE PRESIDENT OF GBS... A DIRECTOR OF GALAXY COMMUNICATIONS. YOURS IS THE LARGEST ENTERPRISE IN THIS CITY THAT'S NOT OWNED BY LEXCORP.

MORGAN, I KNOW THERE'S NO LOVE LOST BETWEEN YOU AND LUTHOR. YOU COULD CONVINCE YOUR BOARD TO MATCH LUTHOR'S BID!

WELL... I'M VERY *FLATTERED* THAT YOU CAME TO ME PERSONALLY WITH THIS...

... BUT I'M AFRAID I MUST-- REGRETFULLY-- TURN YOU DOWN.

I JUST DON'T THINK THAT BUYING S.T.A.R. WOULD BE IN GALAXY'S BEST INTERESTS.

...ESPECIALLY SINCE I STAND TO MAKE A *KILLING* BY SELLING LUTHOR THE STOCK I'VE ALREADY BOUGHT!

MEANWHILE, AT A MAJOR BROKERAGE...

DEI..... 29.5.....

THAT'S RIGHT, MR. EAGLETON, S.T.A.R. PRICES HAVE GONE THROUGH THE ROOF! THE WORD ON THE STREET IS THAT LUTHOR WILL RAISE HIS OFFER TO $75 A SHARE BEFORE THIS IS ALL OVER!

I'D ADVISE YOU TO BUY A FEW MORE SHARES WHILE THERE'S STILL...

...EXCUSE ME? YOU WANT TO WHAT?

SELL?!?

WHAT ARE YOU, CRAZY?!?

NO...NO... I'M SORRY, SIR!

YES, MR. EAGLETON... IF YOU WANT TO SELL, THERE'LL BE NO TROUBLE UNLOADING YOUR SHARES.

I'LL PICK UP A FEW MYSELF!

I WANT THE PROFITS TRANSFERRED TO MY SWISS ACCOUNT, IS THAT CLEAR?

I'LL ARRANGE THE TRANSFER IMMEDIATELY. WILL THERE BE ANYTHING ELSE, MR. EAGLETON?

IF THERE IS, I'LL BE IN TOUCH! GOOD-BYE!

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED, SIR!

WELL DONE, EAGLETON--

-- THANKS TO YOUR EFFORTS, WE MORE THAN *DOUBLED* OUR INVESTMENT IN MERE WEEKS!

THANK YOU, SIR... BUT YOUR GENIUS WAS REALLY RESPONSIBLE.

WHY, S.T.A.R. STOCK WAS SELLING FOR ONLY $20 A SHARE, WHEN YOU SET ME UP WITH THAT *DUMMY* CORPORATION.

I WAS ABLE TO ACQUIRE SO MANY SHARES BEFORE YOU *LEAKED* THE RUMORS OF YOUR INTENDED BUY-OUT, THAT--!

YES, YES... I KNOW.

GEORGE, I THINK IT WOULD BE FOR THE BEST IF YOU TOOK A WELL-DESERVED *VACATION* AT MY EXPENSE. SAY, TO *TAHITI*?

TAHITI! OH, SIR... I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO *SAY*!

SAY "GOOD-BYE," GEORGE.

GOOD-BYE, SIR! AND THANK YOU AGAIN!

'SCUSE ME, ABERNATHY!

LEX LUTHOR

WHA--? GEORGE?!?

UH, LEX... DIDN'T YOU *FIRE* HIM JUST A FEW WEEKS AGO?

♂ BALI HAI A-WAITS YOU ♂

IT DID *APPEAR* THAT WAY, DIDN'T IT?

COME IN AND CLOSE THE DOOR, CAROLINE. THERE IS A NEW ANNOUNCEMENT FOR YOU TO PREPARE...

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. I HAVE JUST COME FROM A MEETING WITH MR. LUTHOR AND HIS KEY ADVISERS, AND HAVE BEEN ASKED TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING ANNOUNCEMENT...

LEXCORP

IN LIGHT OF CERTAIN RECENT DEVELOPMENTS... WHICH I AM NOT CURRENTLY AT LIBERTY TO DIVULGE... IT IS THE DECISION OF THE LEXCORP GROUP--

"--TO DROP ITS RECENT OFFER FOR S.T.A.R. LABORATORIES!"

I WONDER WHY HE BACKED OUT?

WE'RE SAVED!

HALLELUJAH!

WHO CARES? WE'RE HOME FREE!

NO, NOT EXACTLY "FREE" THERE'S STILL THE MATTER OF ALL THOSE EXTRA SHARES WE ISSUED.

"... AND I CAN JUST GUESS WHAT THE REACTION ON THE EXCHANGE WILL BE!"

WHAT'LL YOU GIVE ME FOR S.T.A.R.?

$15 A SHARE? NO?! HOW ABOUT $12?

GIMME A BREAK! I'M DYING OUT HERE!

NO!!!

MILLIONS! I'M OUT MILLIONS!

I'M SORRY. MR. EDGE IS... UH... NOT TAKING ANY CALLS.

THAT LUTHOR... I'D SWEAR HE DID THIS TO ME DELIBERATELY!

TWELVE HOURS LATER...

I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE HOW YOU KEPT ME IN THE DARK FOR SO LONG, LEX... I AM SUPPOSED TO BE ONE OF YOUR TOP FINANCIAL ADVISERS!

LEXCORP

LUTHOR - 321

TUT-TUT, CAROLINE... THE FEWER PEOPLE WHO KNEW THE *TRUTH* ABOUT EAGLETON'S AND SIMMONS'S "FIRINGS," THE BETTER.

YOU REALIZE THAT IF THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION EVER FOUND OUT ABOUT THE MANEUVERS YOU PULLED WITH YOUR DUMMY CORPORATIONS--!

THE ONLY PEOPLE WHO MIGHT TELL THEM DO NOT *DARE!*

AH...

HERE WE ARE NOW!

WELCOME TO YOUR NEW *PSIONICS LAB*, SIR!

YESSIR. KEY S.T.A.R. PERSONNEL BRIEFED MY "*SIMTECH*" CREW ON EVERYTHING BEFORE THEY LEFT.

THANK YOU, SIMMONS. I TRUST EVERYTHING IS IN PLACE?

I HAVE TO SAY, SIR, THIS *PHONY TAKEOVER SCAM* WAS INGENIOUS! WE PICKED UP THIS COMPLEX FOR A *SONG*... IT ALL WENT LIKE CLOCKWORK!

YOU MUST BE A VERY HAPPY MAN!

HAPPY? YES, I SUPPOSE.

THIS *HAS* BEEN AN INVIGORATING EXERCISE-- BUT IT WAS ALMOST *TOO EASY*. FOR YEARS, I'VE SET MYSELF AGAINST... MUCH MORE POWERFUL OPPONENTS.

I WONDER IF I SHALL EVER AGAIN FACE ANY *REAL* CHALLENGES?

END?

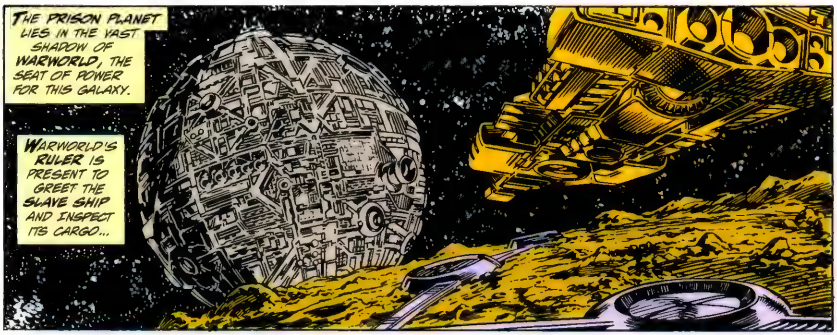
MEMORIES OF KRYPTON'S PAST

presented by:

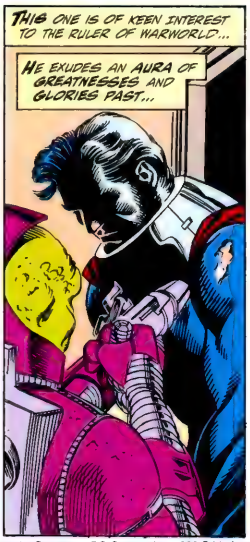
JERRY ORDWAY — WRITER / PENCILLER • JOHN STATEMA — INKER | GEORGE PÉREZ — WRITER / INKER • MIKE MIGNOLA — PENCILLER | ROGER STERN — WRITER • CURT SWAN — PENCILLER • BRETT BREEDING — INKER

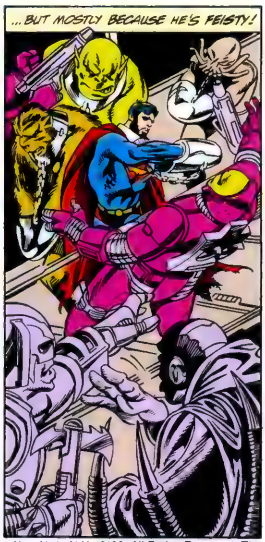
BILL OAKLEY — letterer • GLENN WHITMORE — colorist • RENÉE WITTERSTAETTER — asst. editor • MIKE CARLIN — el grande honcho

SUPERMAN CREATED BY JERRY SIEGEL AND JOE SHUSTER


THE PRISON PLANET LIES IN THE VAST SHADOW OF WARWORLD, THE SEAT OF POWER FOR THIS GALAXY.
WARWORLD'S RULER IS PRESENT TO GREET THE SLAVE SHIP AND INSPECT ITS CARGO...

NOT ALL THE SHIP'S OCCUPANTS ARE DESTINED FOR SLAVERY...
...SOME ARE SOUGHT FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE GAMES-- A GLADITORIAL COMPETITION HELD EACH CYCLE TO AMUSE THE UPPER CLASS.
(KEEP MOVING, KEEP MOVING.)





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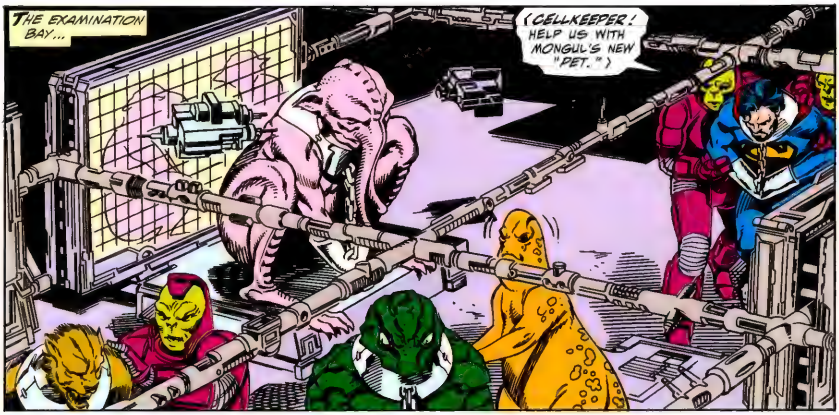
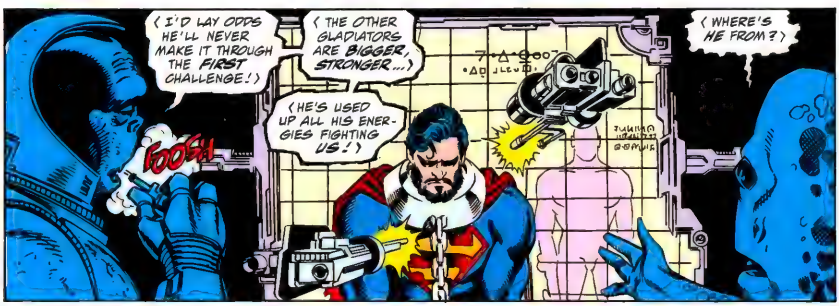
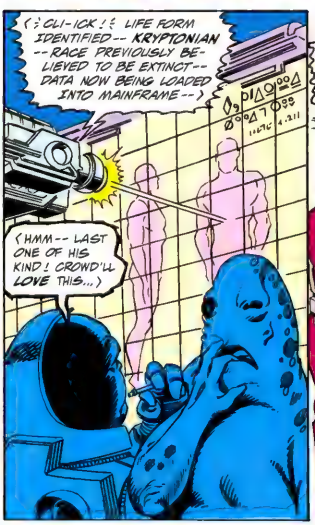
FEIST INTERESTS MONGUL, EMPEROR OF WARWORLD.
(MAJESTY-- ALLOW ME TO--)
(SAVE YOUR ENERGIES FOR THE GAMES, GLADIATOR.)
(ADDRESS ME AGAIN AND I'LL HAVE YOUR TONGUE!)
STILL, FEIST MUST BE KEPT IN IT'S PLACE
(BRING HIM FORTH.)
(HE KILLED KAARGL TO GET AT THE BLUE ONE...)
(SHHH...)
(SEE THAT HE IS READY FOR THE FIRST GAME.)
(DRAAGA HASN'T HAD A SOLID CHALLENGE FOR MANY CYCLES NOW...)
(TAKE ME BACK TO WARWORLD, LACKEY!)

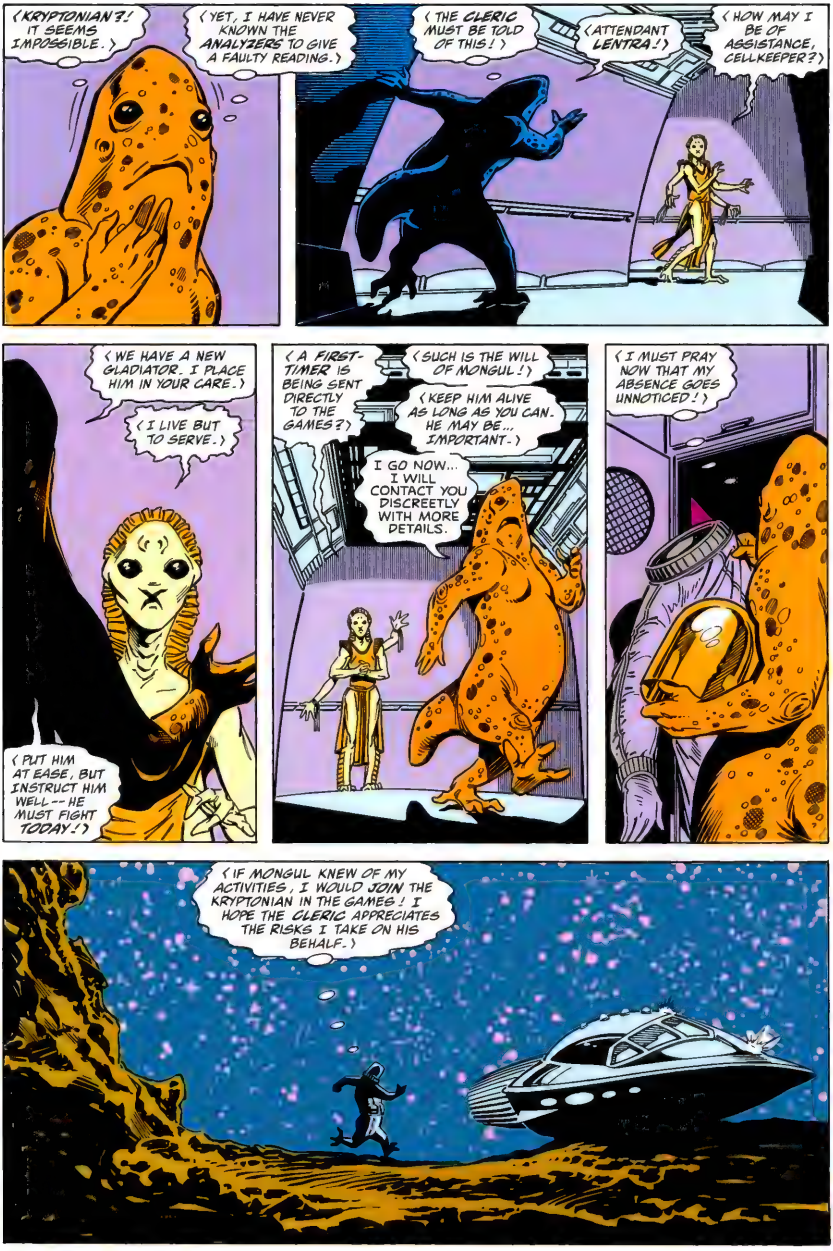

THE EXAMINATION BAY...
〈CELLKEEPER! HELP US WITH MONGUL'S NEW "PET."〉

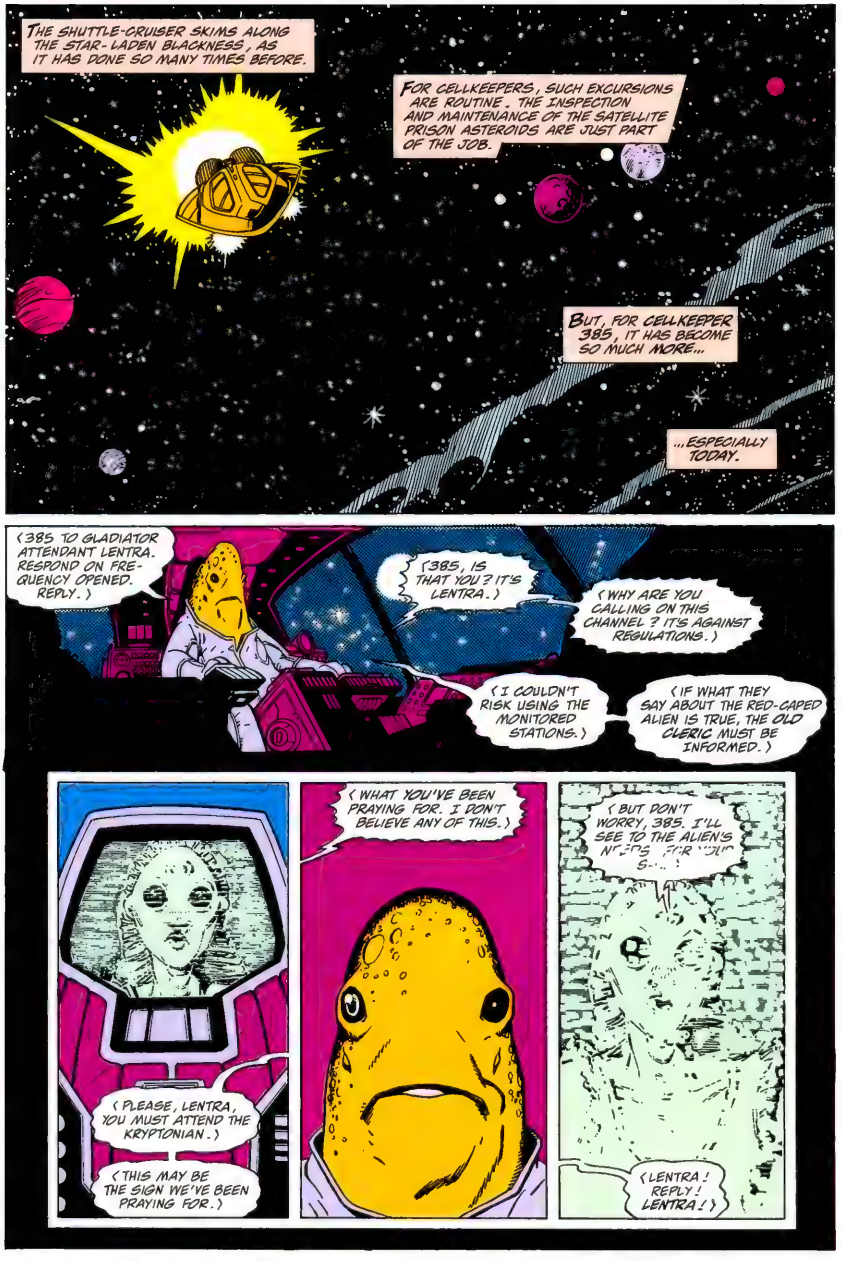

〈I'D LAY ODDS HE'LL NEVER MAKE IT THROUGH THE FIRST CHALLENGE!〉
〈THE OTHER GLADIATORS ARE BIGGER, STRONGER...〉
〈WHERE'S HE FROM?〉
KOOSH!
〈HE'S USED UP ALL HIS ENERGIES FIGHTING US!〉

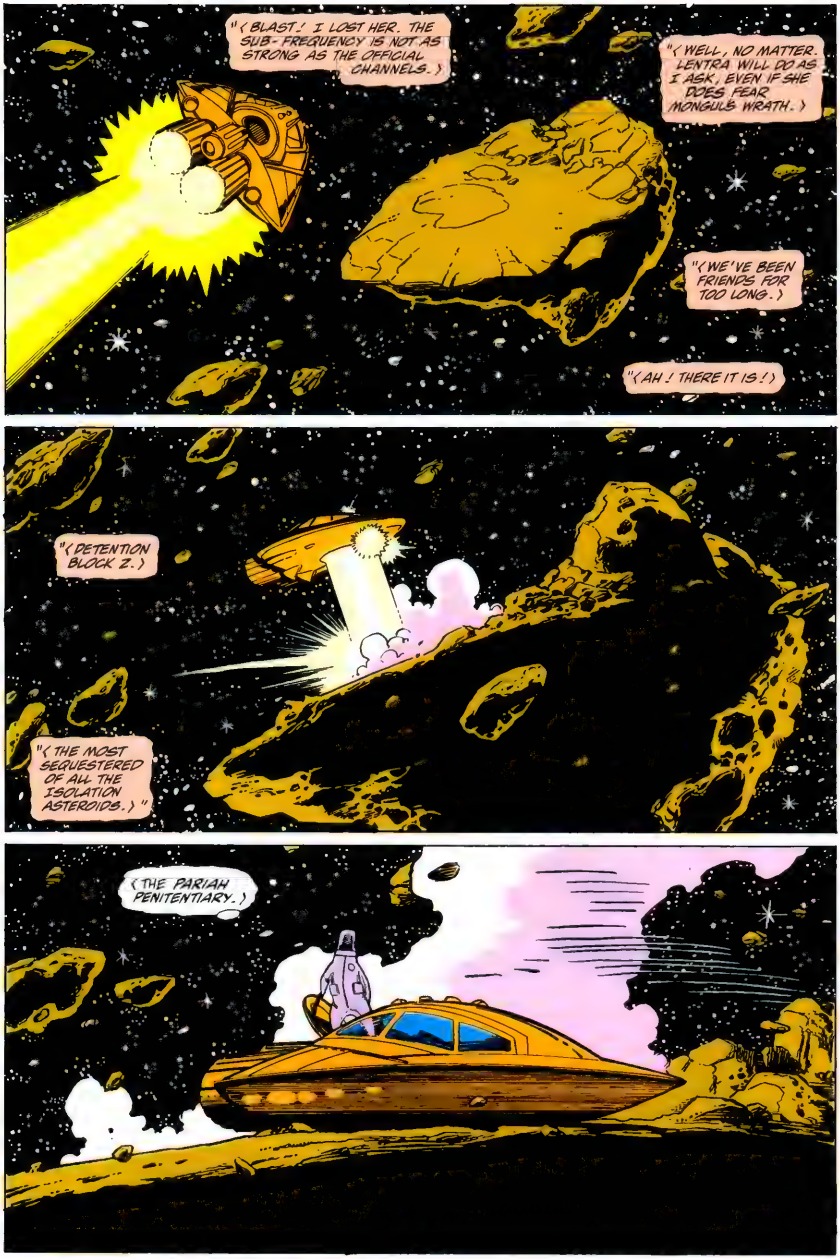
〈SLAVE SHIP FOUND HIM IN SPACE, THOUGHT HE WAS DEAD, AND THEY PULLED HIM IN TO SEARCH THE BODY FOR VALUABLES.〉
〈SO ONCE INSIDE HE REVIVES AND STARTS FIGHTING, * AND HE'S BEEN AT IT SINCE!〉
〈I DON'T SEE WHAT'S SO SPECIAL--〉
* ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN #454


〈:CLI-ICK!: LIFE FORM IDENTIFIED-- KRYPTONIAN --RACE PREVIOUSLY BELIEVED TO BE EXTINCT-- DATA NOW BEING LOADED INTO MAINFRAME--〉
〈HMM-- LAST ONE OF HIS KIND! CROWD'LL LOVE THIS...〉

〈TAKE HIM TO A CUBICLE. I'LL HAVE AN ATTENDANT SENT TO PRIME HIM FOR THE START OF THE COMPETITION.〉

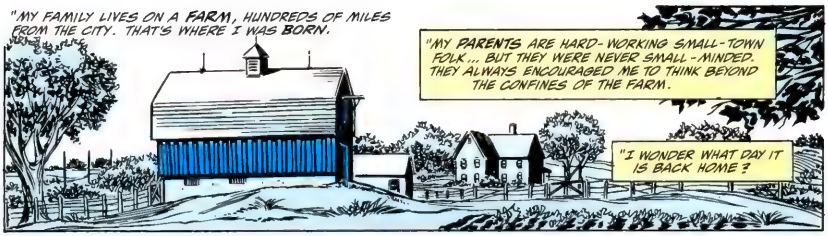

〈KRYPTONIAN?! IT SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE.〉
〈YET, I HAVE NEVER KNOWN THE ANALYZERS TO GIVE A FAULTY READING.〉
〈THE CLERIC MUST BE TOLD OF THIS!〉
〈ATTENDANT LENTRA!〉
〈HOW MAY I BE OF ASSISTANCE, CELL-KEEPER?〉
〈WE HAVE A NEW GLADIATOR. I PLACE HIM IN YOUR CARE.〉
〈I LIVE BUT TO SERVE.〉
〈PUT HIM AT EASE, BUT INSTRUCT HIM WELL -- HE MUST FIGHT TODAY.〉
〈A FIRST-TIMER IS BEING SENT DIRECTLY TO THE GAMES?〉
〈SUCH IS THE WILL OF MONGUL!〉
〈KEEP HIM ALIVE AS LONG AS YOU CAN. HE MAY BE... IMPORTANT.〉
I GO NOW... I WILL CONTACT YOU DISCREETLY WITH MORE DETAILS.
〈I MUST PRAY NOW THAT MY ABSENCE GOES UNNOTICED!〉
〈IF MONGUL KNEW OF MY ACTIVITIES, I WOULD JOIN THE KRYPTONIAN IN THE GAMES! I HOPE THE CLERIC APPRECIATES THE RISKS I TAKE ON HIS BEHALF.〉


THE SHUTTLE-CRUISER SKIMS ALONG THE STAR-LADEN BLACKNESS, AS IT HAS DONE SO MANY TIMES BEFORE.
FOR CELLKEEPERS, SUCH EXCURSIONS ARE ROUTINE. THE INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE SATELLITE PRISON ASTEROIDS ARE JUST PART OF THE JOB.
BUT, FOR CELLKEEPER 385, IT HAS BECOME SO MUCH MORE...
...ESPECIALLY TODAY.
(385 TO GLADIATOR ATTENDANT LENTRA. RESPOND ON FREQUENCY OPENED. REPLY.)
(385, IS THAT YOU? IT'S LENTRA.)
(WHY ARE YOU CALLING ON THIS CHANNEL? IT'S AGAINST REGULATIONS.)
(I COULDN'T RISK USING THE MONITORED STATIONS.)
(IF WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT THE RED-CAPED ALIEN IS TRUE, THE OLD CLERIC MUST BE INFORMED.)
(PLEASE, LENTRA, YOU MUST ATTEND THE KRYPTONIAN.)
(THIS MAY BE THE SIGN WE'VE BEEN PRAYING FOR.)
(WHAT YOU'VE BEEN PRAYING FOR. I DON'T BELIEVE ANY OF THIS.)
(BUT DON'T WORRY, 385. I'LL SEE TO THE ALIEN'S
(LENTRA! REPLY! LENTRA!)


"(BLAST! I LOST HER. THE SUB-FREQUENCY IS NOT AS STRONG AS THE OFFICIAL CHANNELS.)
"(WELL, NO MATTER. LENTRA WILL DO AS I ASK, EVEN IF SHE DOES FEAR MONGUL'S WRATH.)
"(WE'VE BEEN FRIENDS FOR TOO LONG.)
"(AH! THERE IT IS!)
"(DETENTION BLOCK Z.)
"(THE MOST SEQUESTERED OF ALL THE ISOLATION ASTEROIDS.)"
(THE PARIAH PENITENTIARY.)

IN THE CAVERNS OF THE PRISON PLANET, THE NEW ACQUISITION HAS SLOWLY REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS.
AFTER WEEKS OF SPACE TRAVEL, DEPRIVED OF THE ENERGIZING RAYS OF A YELLOW STAR, HIS POWERS HAVE BEEN TAXED, HIS GREAT STRENGTH DEPLETED.
UNTOLD LIGHT YEARS FROM HOME, HE HAS FOUND HIMSELF A CAPTIVE.
I CAN FEEL HIS DESPAIR--
--HANGING ABOUT HIM LIKE A HEAVY CLOAK. WHAT IS THIS ONUS WHICH SO WEIGHS UPON HIM?
SALUTATIONS, MIGHTY WARRIOR...
WHAT?! WHO ARE YOU?
BE AT PEACE... I AM HERE TO HELP YOU.
YOU ARE?
YOU CAN HELP ME GET MY TELEPORT GEAR BACK... AND ESCAPE THIS WORLD?
ESCAPE?
I AM HERE TO PREPARE YOU FOR THE GAMES OF EMPEROR MONGUL! ONLY BY SURVIVING THE GAMES MAY A GLADIATOR WIN FREEDOM.
YOU WERE NOT TOLD--?
NO.
MY CHOICES THEN ARE TO FIGHT OR DIE?
YES, I CANNOT UNDERSTAND WHY THE GUARDS DID NOT INFORM YOU.
I... GAVE THEM A LITTLE TROUBLE.
WELL, DESPAIR NO MORE...

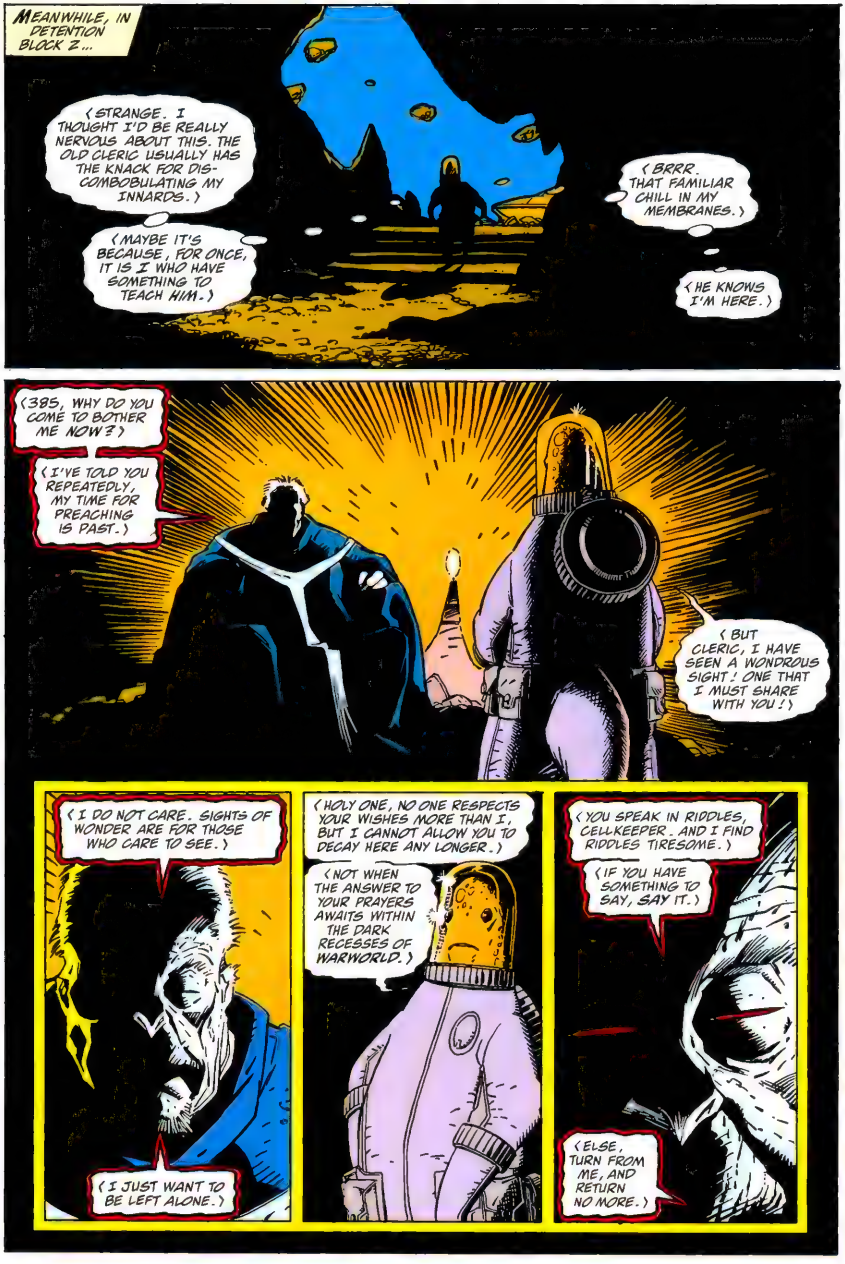
... I AM SURE YOU WILL GIVE A GOOD ACCOUNTING OF YOURSELF! YOU APPEAR QUITE FIT!
I'VE HEARD A DOZEN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES SINCE I WAS BROUGHT HERE... AND DIDN'T UNDERSTAND ONE OF THEM. HOW IS IT THAT WE CAN COMMUNICATE?
I AM A LEVEL-THREE TELEPATH.
BUT YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN GIVEN A TRANSLATOR PLUG. I WILL SEE TO THAT!
IS THERE A COMMON TONGUE ON YOUR PLANET?
NO, MY WORLD HAS MANY LANGUAGES.
WHAT IS IT LIKE?
IT'S A BEAUTIFUL PLACE... WE CALL IT SIMPLY "EARTH." BILLIONS OF PEOPLE LIVE THERE, MANY OF THEM CLUSTERED TOGETHER IN GREAT CITIES. MY CITY WAS METROPOLIS.
"YOU ARE THE CHAMPION OF THIS... METROPOLIS?"
"I WAS."
"YOU HAVE FAMILY THERE?"
S.T.A.R.
DAILY PLANET
"NO... MANY FRIENDS, THOUGH. MOST OF THEM WORK TO COLLECT THE NEWS OF THE DAY -- FROM ALL OVER THE PLANET -- FOR THE CITIZENS OF METROPOLIS.

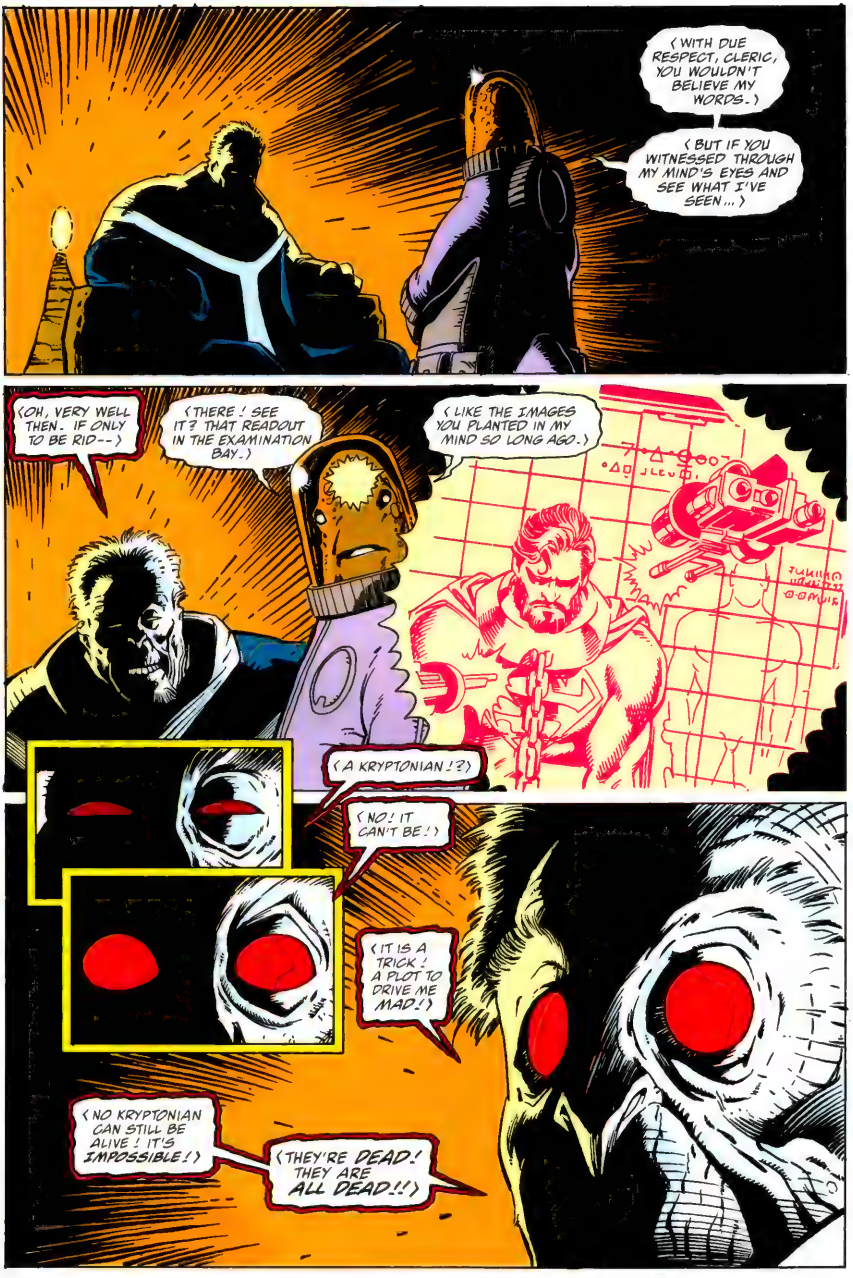

"MY FAMILY LIVES ON A FARM, HUNDREDS OF MILES FROM THE CITY. THAT'S WHERE I WAS BORN.
"MY PARENTS ARE HARD-WORKING SMALL-TOWN FOLK... BUT THEY WERE NEVER SMALL-MINDED. THEY ALWAYS ENCOURAGED ME TO THINK BEYOND THE CONFINES OF THE FARM.
"I WONDER WHAT DAY IT IS BACK HOME?

"IF IT'S SUNDAY, I IMAGINE THAT MA AND PA WILL BE SITTING DOWN TO AN EARLY DINNER WITH THE NEW FOSTER CHILD THEY'VE TAKEN IN.
"IF I KNOW MA, SHE'LL HAVE INVITED LANA LANG OVER, TOO. I CAN ALMOST TASTE THE CHICKEN AND DUMPLINGS."

I HOPE THEY'RE ALL WELL. THEY'RE SO VERY FAR AWAY... AND I MISS THEM ALL SO VERY MUCH.
YOUR WORLD SOUNDS SO PLEASANT. WHY DID YOU LEAVE IT?
THAT'S... A LONG STORY.
LET'S JUST SAY I THOUGHT IT BEST FOR ALL CONCERNED THAT I GO OFF-PLANET.

HEY! BRING BACK MY CAPE!!
MA SAID TO WEAR IT... WHEREVER I GO.


MEANWHILE, IN DETENTION BLOCK Z...
(STRANGE. I THOUGHT I'D BE REALLY NERVOUS ABOUT THIS. THE OLD CLERIC USUALLY HAS THE KNACK FOR DISCOMBOBULATING MY INNARDS.)
(MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE, FOR ONCE, IT IS I WHO HAVE SOMETHING TO TEACH HIM.)
(BRRR. THAT FAMILIAR CHILL IN MY MEMBRANES.)
(HE KNOWS I'M HERE.)
(385, WHY DO YOU COME TO BOTHER ME NOW?)
(I'VE TOLD YOU REPEATEDLY, MY TIME FOR PREACHING IS PAST.)
(BUT CLERIC, I HAVE SEEN A WONDROUS SIGHT! ONE THAT I MUST SHARE WITH YOU!)
(I DO NOT CARE. SIGHTS OF WONDER ARE FOR THOSE WHO CARE TO SEE.)
(I JUST WANT TO BE LEFT ALONE.)
(HOLY ONE, NO ONE RESPECTS YOUR WISHES MORE THAN I, BUT I CANNOT ALLOW YOU TO DECAY HERE ANY LONGER.)
(NOT WHEN THE ANSWER TO YOUR PRAYERS AWAITS WITHIN THE DARK RECESSES OF WARWORLD.)
(YOU SPEAK IN RIDDLES, CELLKEEPER. AND I FIND RIDDLES TIRESOME.)
(IF YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY, SAY IT.)
(ELSE, TURN FROM ME, AND RETURN NO MORE.)

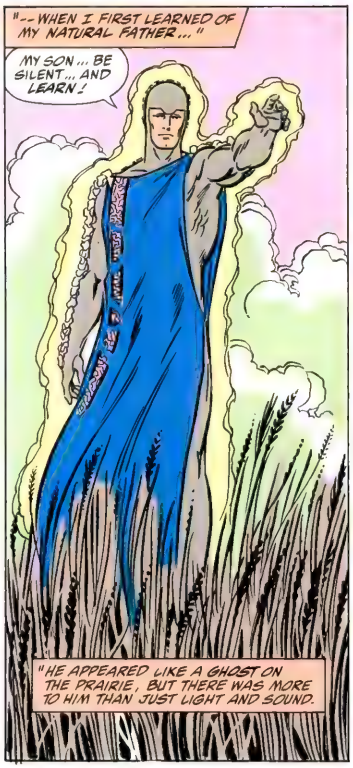

(WITH DUE RESPECT, CLERIC, YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE MY WORDS.)
(BUT IF YOU WITNESSED THROUGH MY MIND'S EYES AND SEE WHAT I'VE SEEN...)
(OH, VERY WELL THEN. IF ONLY TO BE RID--)
(THERE! SEE IT? THAT READOUT IN THE EXAMINATION BAY.)
(LIKE THE IMAGES YOU PLANTED IN MY MIND SO LONG AGO.)
(A KRYPTONIAN!?)
(NO! IT CAN'T BE!)
(IT IS A TRICK! A PLOT TO DRIVE ME MAD!)
(NO KRYPTONIAN CAN STILL BE ALIVE! IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!)
(THEY'RE DEAD! THEY ARE ALL DEAD!!)

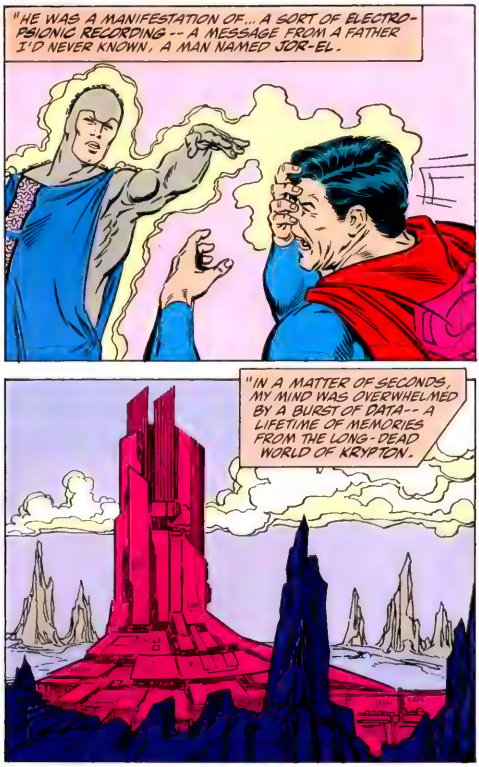
IT IS ALMOST TIME FOR BATTLE...
HERE. THESE WILL ENABLE YOU TO BREATHE THE ARENA'S ATMOSPHERE.
WHAT DO I DO WITH--
:SNUFF:
UH, THANKS!
YOU'VE BEEN VERY HELPFUL.
I KNOW I WILL SEE YOU AGAIN. THERE IS AN AURA ABOUT YOU.
THESE "JUMPS" ARE A BIT UNNERVING!
HMM... A BARREN TERRAIN. I'D IMAGINED AN ARENA OF SOME SORT.
THAT LIGHT UP AHEAD MUST HERALD MY OPPONENT'S ARRIVAL.
"HEAR ME, WARRIORS..."
...THE SOLE RULE OF THIS CONTEST IS THAT THIS IS TO BE A FIGHT TO THE DEATH...
TO THE DEATH! TO THE DEATH!
ON MY WORD, LET THE GAMES BEGIN!

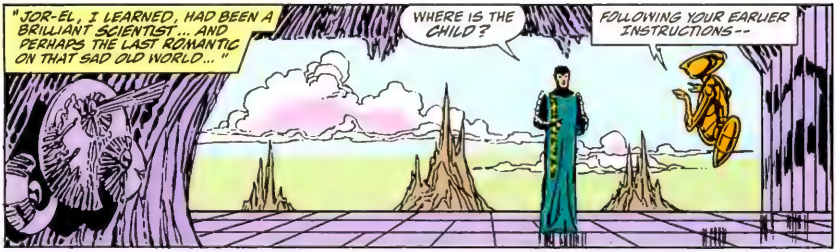
TO THE DEATH? THE CROWD'S BOUND TO BE DISAPPOINTED...
I WON'T KILL -- ESPECIALLY NOT FOR SPORT!
I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT MY OPPONENT WILL BE AFTER MY BLOOD -- IF HE EVER SHOWS HIS FACE!
I CERTAINLY DIDN'T LEAVE EARTH TO BECOME A GLADIATOR!
IF MY POWERS WERE AT THEIR PEAK, I'D BE LONG GONE -- AWAY FRO--

SSSSS
DON'T WORRY, FELLA. I WON'T LET YOU FALL INTO THAT!
(DEATH! KILL HIM! FOLLOW THE RULES!)
NO! HE'S SUFFERED ENOUGH FOR YOUR ENTERTAINMENT!
THERE WILL BE NO BLOOD ON MY HANDS!
(YOU HAVE BESTED ME--NOW KILL ME...)
(...IT IS THE WAY OF THE GAMES!)
"I DON'T CARE! I'M CHANGING THE RULES!"
(KILL THEM BOTH!)
(THIS WEAKNESS WILL DOOM HIM IN THE NEXT CONTEST!)
I'M BACK?!
YOU ARE HERE TO REST UP FOR THE NEXT PHASE.
NEXT PHASE? I WON'T--CAN'T KILL! THERE'S JUST NO WAY MONGUL CAN FORCE ME!
WHY DO I BOTHER TELLING YOU? EVERYONE HERE JUST DOES WHAT HE TELLS THEM TO!
DO NOT JUDGE US ALL SO HARSHLY--WE MERELY DO WHAT WE MUST, TO SURVIVE.
PERHAPS IF YOU TELL ME MORE ABOUT YOUR WORLD, IT WILL BE EASIER TO UNDERSTAND YOUR BIAS.

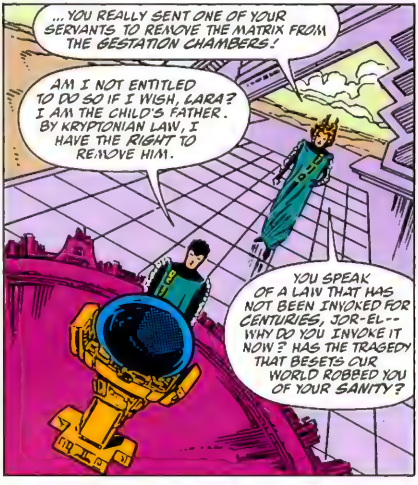
THE ANALYZERS IDENTIFIED YOUR ORIGINS AS KRYPTONIAN, YET YOU CALLED YOUR WORLD "EARTH"-- AND I SENSED NO DECEPTION ON YOUR PART. I AM PUZZLED.
I'M NOT SURPRISED.
I WAS BORN ON EARTH AND LIVED THERE FOR OVER A QUARTER-CENTURY BEFORE I DISCOVERED THAT MY BLOODLINE WAS OF ANOTHER WORLD.
I WAS HOME FOR A VISIT TO MY PARENTS' FARM...

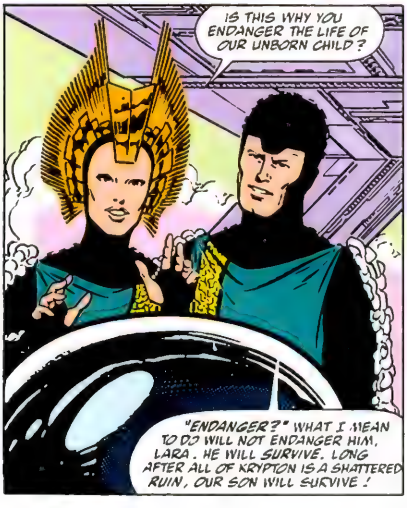

"--WHEN I FIRST LEARNED OF MY NATURAL FATHER..."
MY SON... BE SILENT... AND LEARN!
"HE APPEARED LIKE A GHOST ON THE PRAIRIE, BUT THERE WAS MORE TO HIM THAN JUST LIGHT AND SOUND.

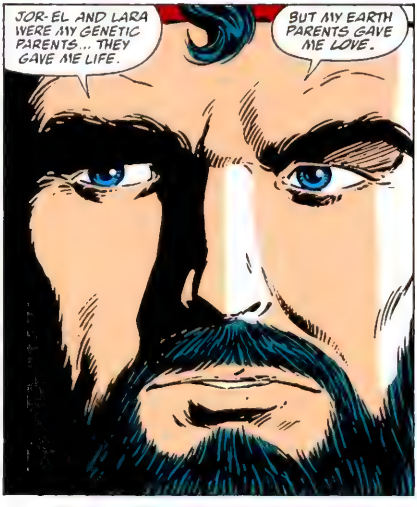

"HE WAS A MANIFESTATION OF... A SORT OF ELECTRO-PSIONIC RECORDING -- A MESSAGE FROM A FATHER I'D NEVER KNOWN, A MAN NAMED JOR-EL.
"IN A MATTER OF SECONDS, MY MIND WAS OVERWHELMED BY A BURST OF DATA-- A LIFETIME OF MEMORIES FROM THE LONG-DEAD WORLD OF KRYPTON.

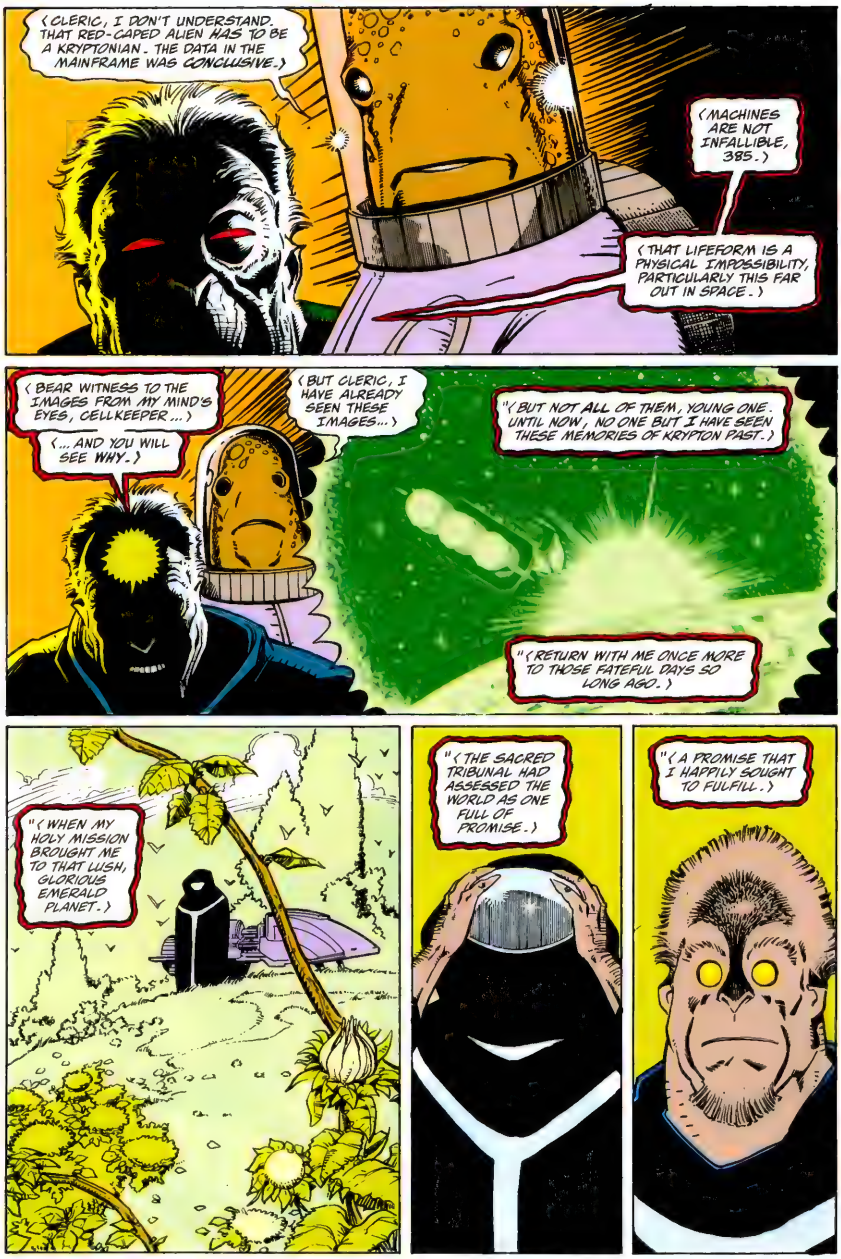

"JOR-EL, I LEARNED, HAD BEEN A BRILLIANT SCIENTIST... AND PERHAPS THE LAST ROMANTIC ON THAT SAD OLD WORLD..."
WHERE IS THE CHILD?
FOLLOWING YOUR EARLIER INSTRUCTIONS--

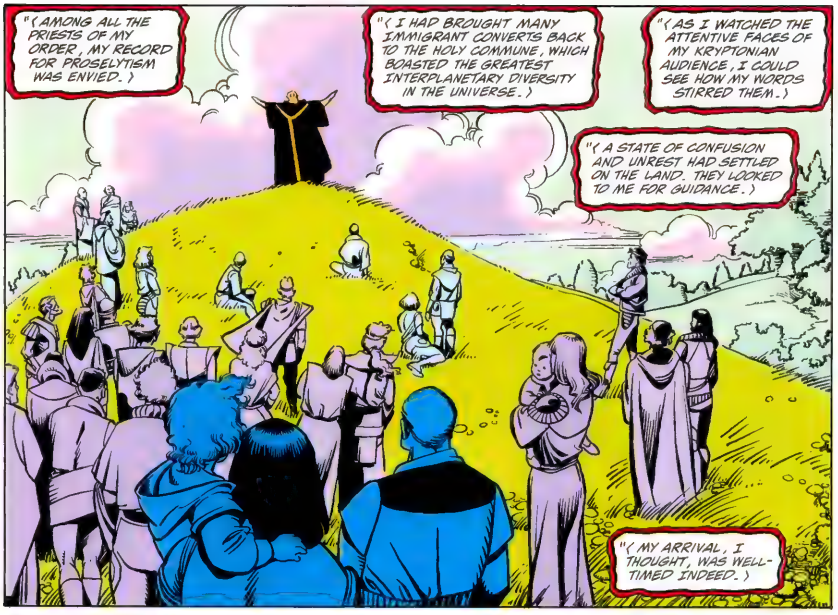
"--I HAVE PLACED THE MATRIX IN THE THIRD LEVEL LABORATORY, SIRE."
MY... SON...
JOR-EL!! THEN IT IS TRUE...

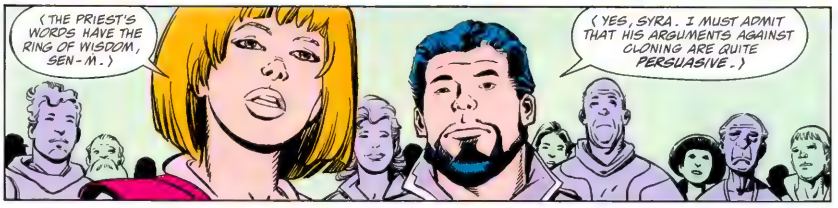

...YOU REALLY SENT ONE OF YOUR SERVANTS TO REMOVE THE MATRIX FROM THE GESTATION CHAMBERS!
AM I NOT ENTITLED TO DO SO IF I WISH, LARA? I AM THE CHILD'S FATHER. BY KRYPTONIAN LAW, I HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMOVE HIM.
YOU SPEAK OF A LAW THAT HAS NOT BEEN INVOKED FOR CENTURIES, JOR-EL-- WHY DO YOU INVOKE IT NOW? HAS THE TRAGEDY THAT BESETS OUR WORLD ROBBED YOU OF YOUR SANITY?

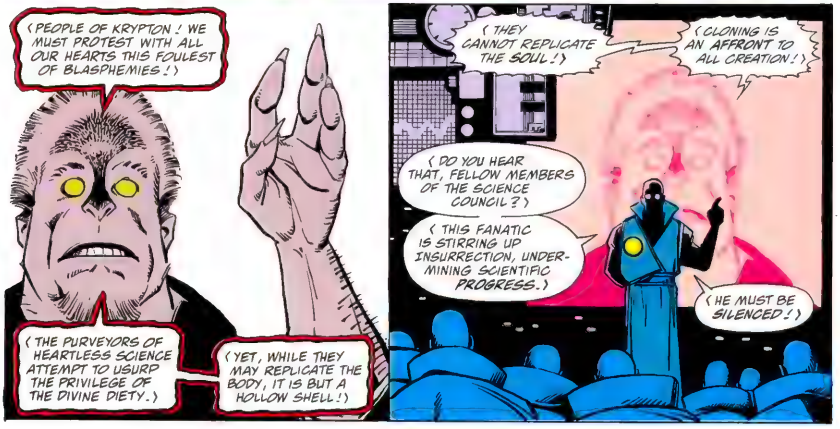

IS THIS WHY YOU ENDANGER THE LIFE OF OUR UNBORN CHILD?
"ENDANGER?" WHAT I MEAN TO DO WILL NOT ENDANGER HIM, LARA. HE WILL SURVIVE. LONG AFTER ALL OF KRYPTON IS A SHATTERED RUIN, OUR SON WILL SURVIVE!

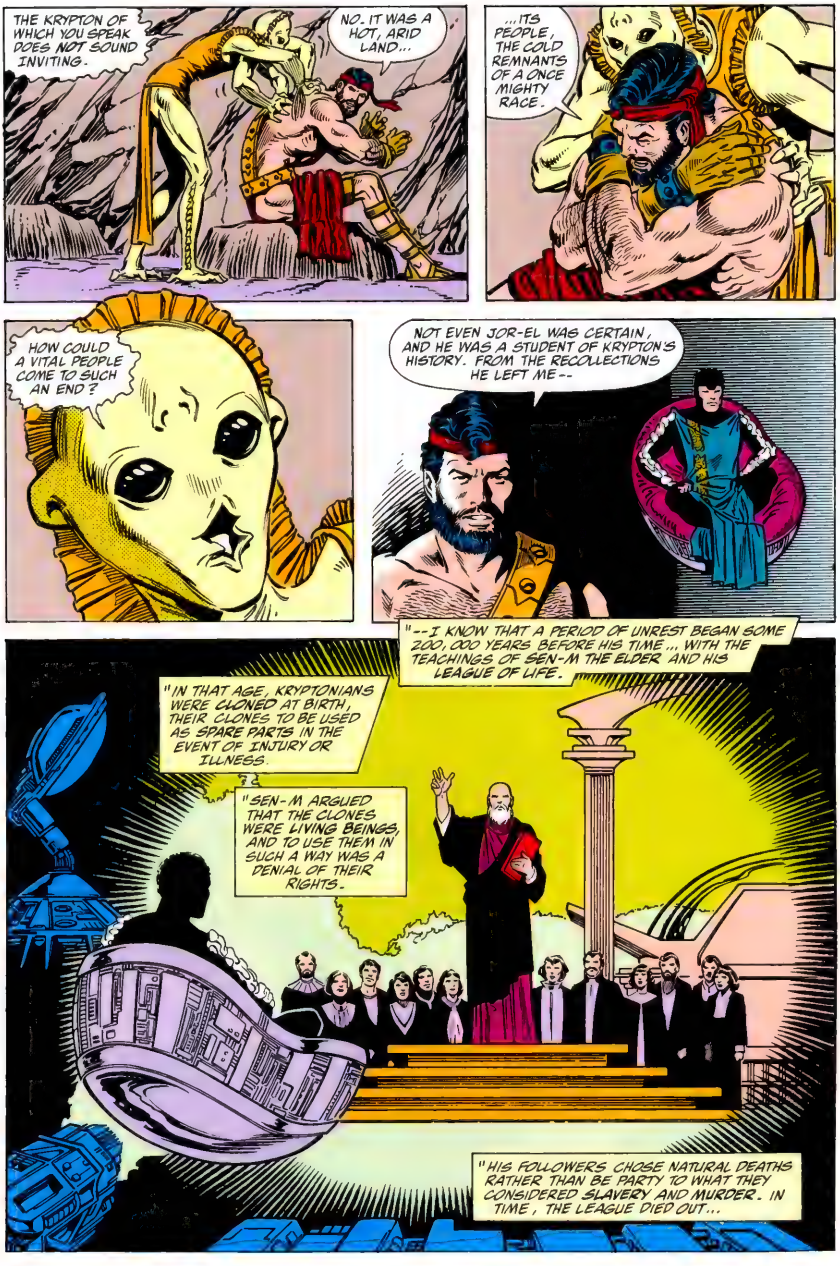

JOR-EL AND LARA WERE MY GENETIC PARENTS... THEY GAVE ME LIFE.
BUT MY EARTH PARENTS GAVE ME LOVE.

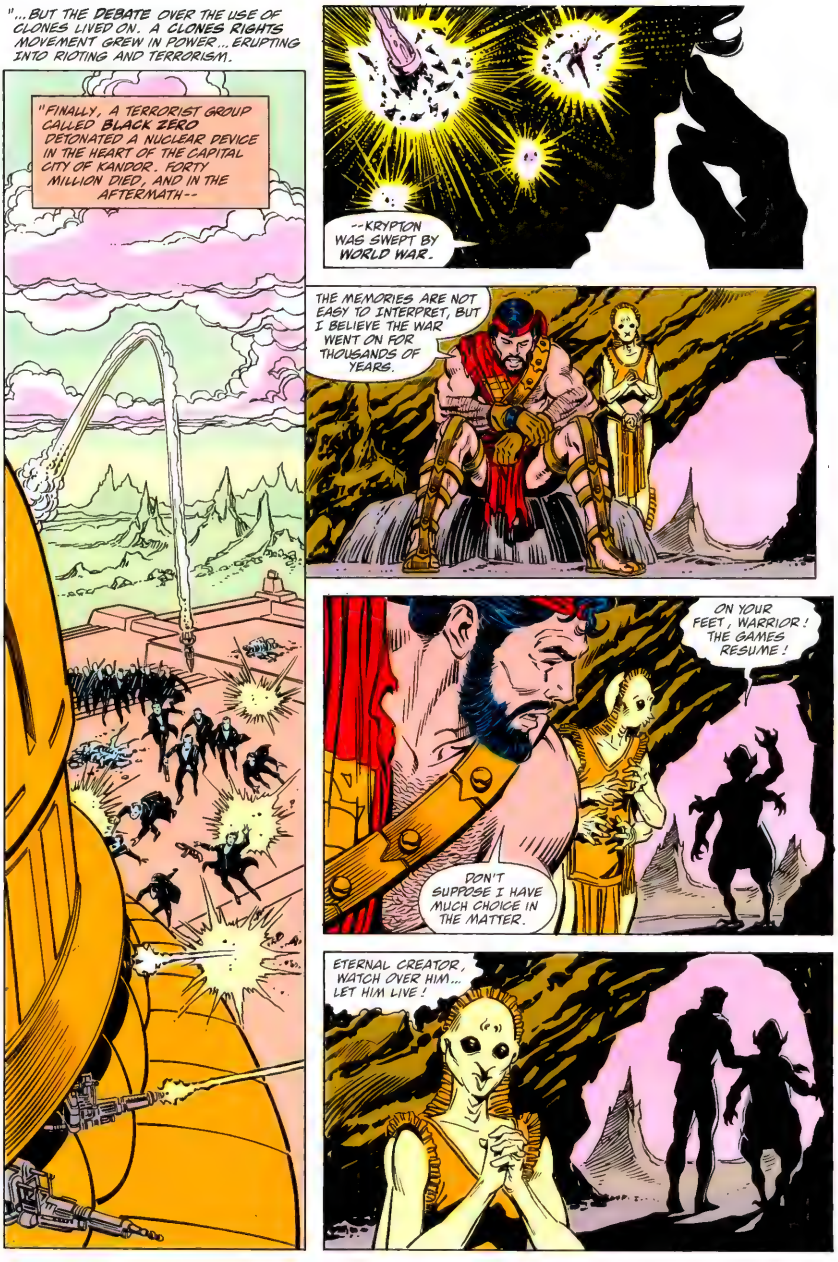

(CLERIC, I DON'T UNDERSTAND. THAT RED-CAPED ALIEN HAS TO BE A KRYPTONIAN. THE DATA IN THE MAINFRAME WAS CONCLUSIVE.)
(MACHINES ARE NOT INFALLIBLE, 385.)
(THAT LIFEFORM IS A PHYSICAL IMPOSSIBILITY, PARTICULARLY THIS FAR OUT IN SPACE.)
(BEAR WITNESS TO THE IMAGES FROM MY MIND'S EYES, CELLKEEPER...)
(...AND YOU WILL SEE WHY.)
(BUT CLERIC, I HAVE ALREADY SEEN THESE IMAGES...)
"(BUT NOT ALL OF THEM, YOUNG ONE. UNTIL NOW, NO ONE BUT I HAVE SEEN THESE MEMORIES OF KRYPTON PAST.)
"(RETURN WITH ME ONCE MORE TO THOSE FATEFUL DAYS SO LONG AGO.)
"(WHEN MY HOLY MISSION BROUGHT ME TO THAT LUSH, GLORIOUS EMERALD PLANET.)
"(THE SACRED TRIBUNAL HAD ASSESSED THE WORLD AS ONE FULL OF PROMISE.)
"(A PROMISE THAT I HAPPILY SOUGHT TO FULFILL.)


"(AMONG ALL THE PRIESTS OF MY ORDER, MY RECORD FOR PROSELYTISM WAS ENVIED.)
"(I HAD BROUGHT MANY IMMIGRANT CONVERTS BACK TO THE HOLY COMMUNE, WHICH BOASTED THE GREATEST INTERPLANETARY DIVERSITY IN THE UNIVERSE.)
"(AS I WATCHED THE ATTENTIVE FACES OF MY KRYPTONIAN AUDIENCE, I COULD SEE HOW MY WORDS STIRRED THEM.)
"(A STATE OF CONFUSION AND UNREST HAD SETTLED ON THE LAND. THEY LOOKED TO ME FOR GUIDANCE.)
"(MY ARRIVAL, I THOUGHT, WAS WELL-TIMED INDEED.)

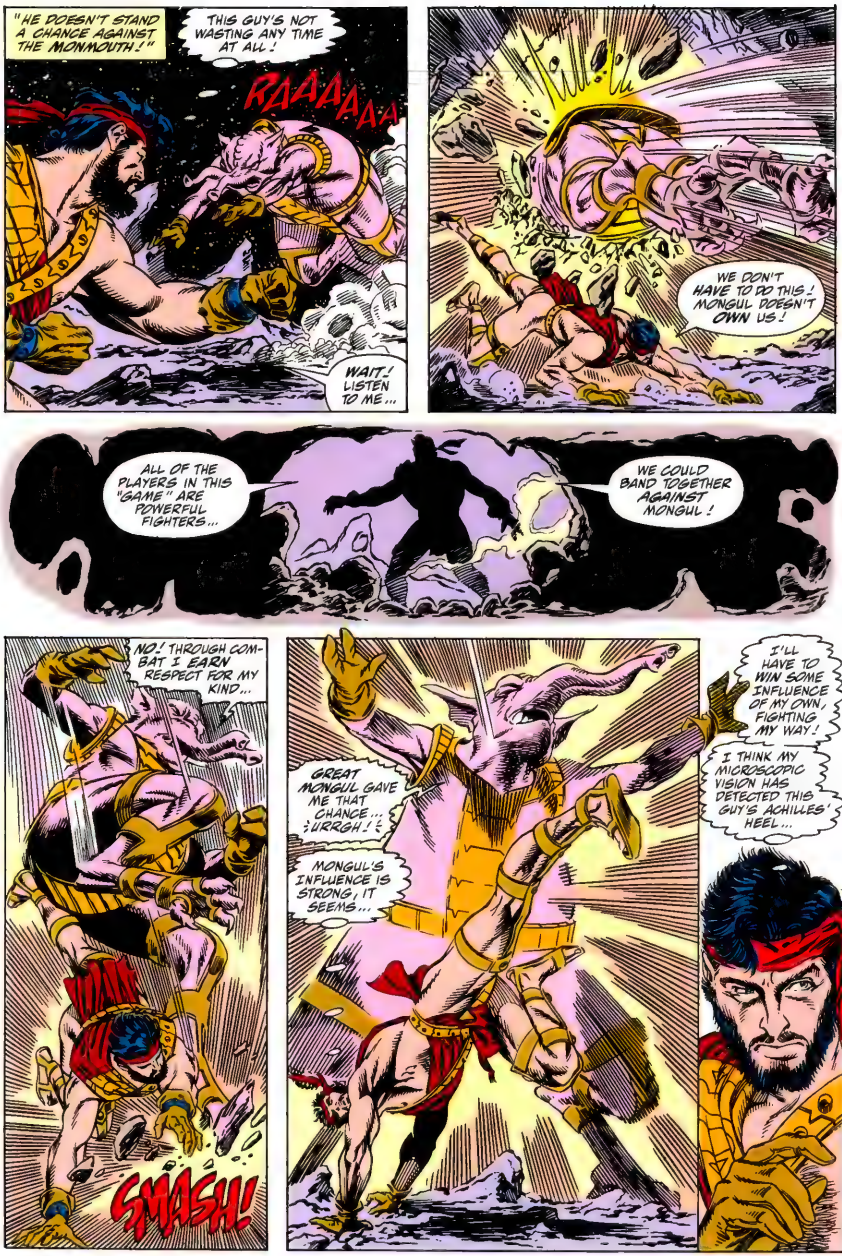

(THE PRIEST'S WORDS HAVE THE RING OF WISDOM, SEN-M.)
(YES, SYRA. I MUST ADMIT THAT HIS ARGUMENTS AGAINST CLONING ARE QUITE PERSUASIVE.)


(PEOPLE OF KRYPTON! WE MUST PROTEST WITH ALL OUR HEARTS THIS FOULEST OF BLASPHEMIES!)
(THE PURVEYORS OF HEARTLESS SCIENCE ATTEMPT TO USURP THE PRIVILEGE OF THE DIVINE DIETY.)
(YET, WHILE THEY MAY REPLICATE THE BODY, IT IS BUT A HOLLOW SHELL!)
(THEY CANNOT REPLICATE THE SOUL!)
(CLONING IS AN AFFRONT TO ALL CREATION!)
(DO YOU HEAR THAT, FELLOW MEMBERS OF THE SCIENCE COUNCIL?)
(THIS FANATIC IS STIRRING UP INSURRECTION, UNDERMINING SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS.)
(HE MUST BE SILENCED!)

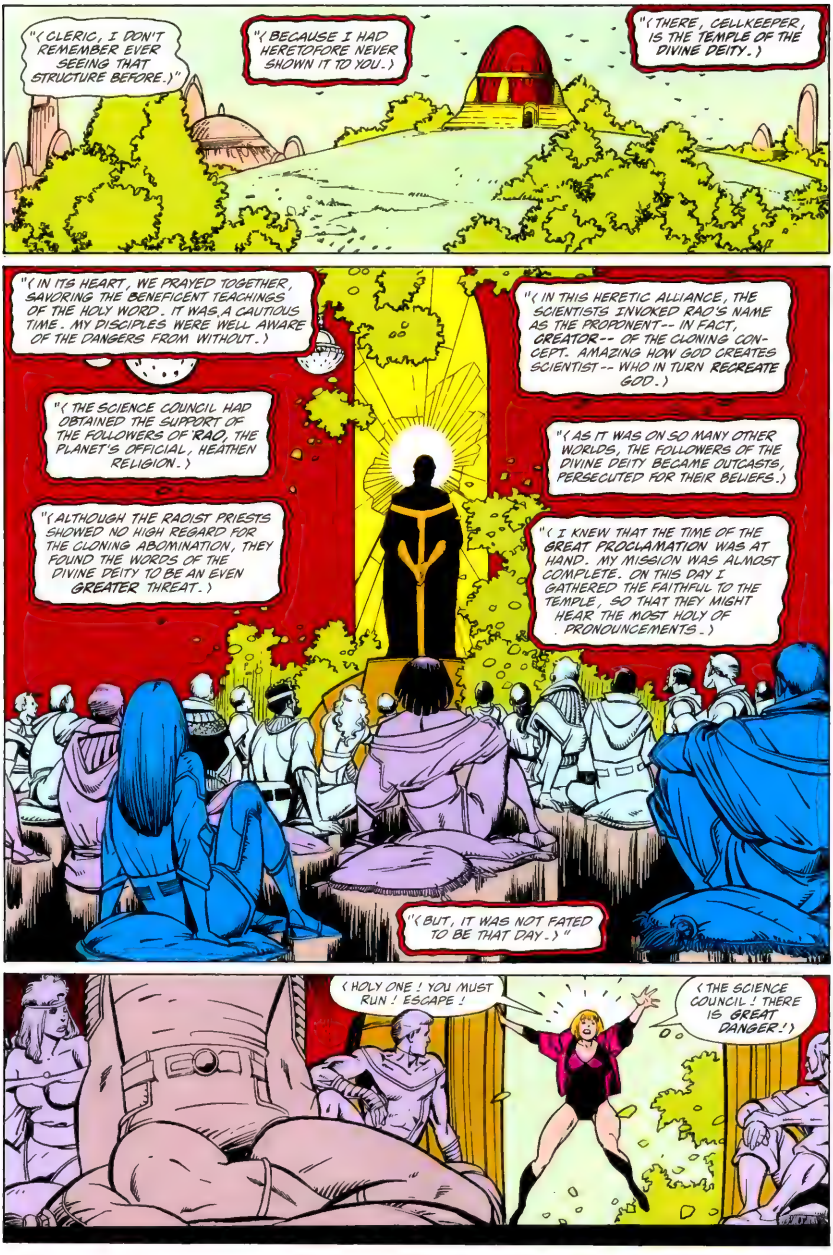

THE KRYPTON OF WHICH YOU SPEAK DOES NOT SOUND INVITING.
NO. IT WAS A HOT, ARID LAND...
...ITS PEOPLE, THE COLD REMNANTS OF A ONCE MIGHTY RACE.
HOW COULD A VITAL PEOPLE COME TO SUCH AN END?
NOT EVEN JOR-EL WAS CERTAIN, AND HE WAS A STUDENT OF KRYPTON'S HISTORY. FROM THE RECOLLECTIONS HE LEFT ME--
"--I KNOW THAT A PERIOD OF UNREST BEGAN SOME 200,000 YEARS BEFORE HIS TIME... WITH THE TEACHINGS OF SEN-M THE ELDER AND HIS LEAGUE OF LIFE.
"IN THAT AGE, KRYPTONIANS WERE CLONED AT BIRTH, THEIR CLONES TO BE USED AS SPARE PARTS IN THE EVENT OF INJURY OR ILLNESS.
"SEN-M ARGUED THAT THE CLONES WERE LIVING BEINGS, AND TO USE THEM IN SUCH A WAY WAS A DENIAL OF THEIR RIGHTS.
"HIS FOLLOWERS CHOSE NATURAL DEATHS RATHER THAN BE PARTY TO WHAT THEY CONSIDERED SLAVERY AND MURDER. IN TIME, THE LEAGUE DIED OUT...

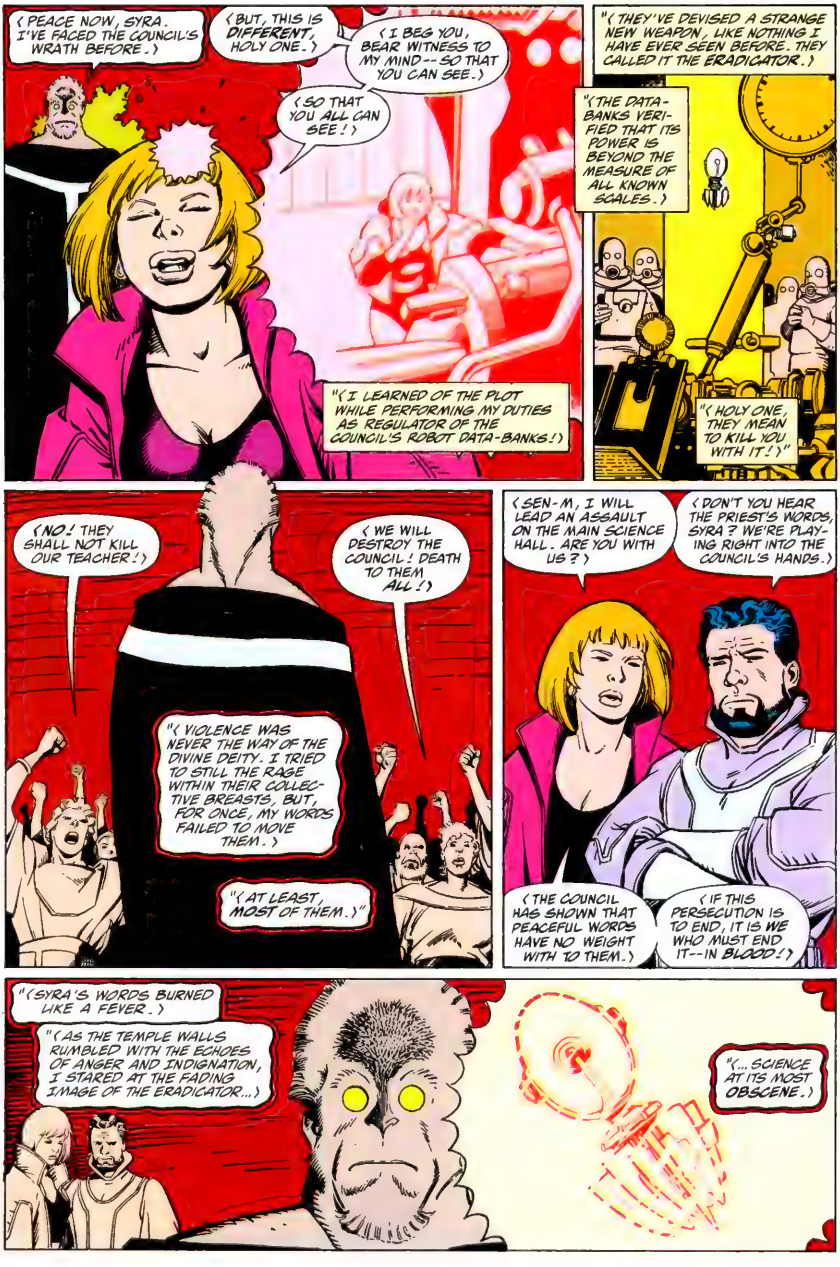

"...BUT THE DEBATE OVER THE USE OF CLONES LIVED ON. A CLONES RIGHTS MOVEMENT GREW IN POWER...ERUPTING INTO RIOTING AND TERRORISM.
"FINALLY, A TERRORIST GROUP CALLED BLACK ZERO DETONATED A NUCLEAR DEVICE IN THE HEART OF THE CAPITAL CITY OF KANDOR. FORTY MILLION DIED, AND IN THE AFTERMATH--
--KRYPTON WAS SWEPT BY WORLD WAR.
THE MEMORIES ARE NOT EASY TO INTERPRET, BUT I BELIEVE THE WAR WENT ON FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS.
ON YOUR FEET, WARRIOR! THE GAMES RESUME!
DON'T SUPPOSE I HAVE MUCH CHOICE IN THE MATTER.
ETERNAL CREATOR, WATCH OVER HIM... LET HIM LIVE!

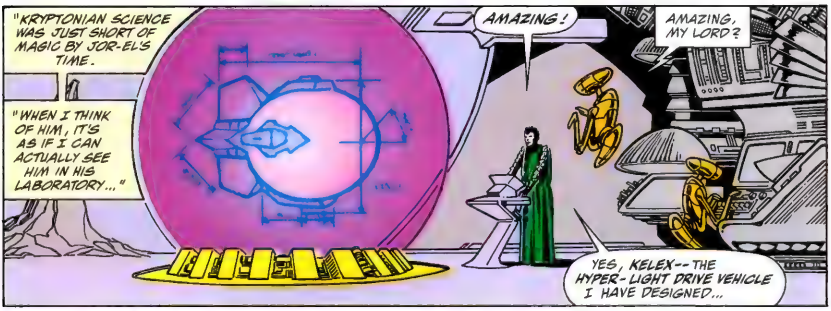
(GREAT AND EXALTED MONGUL -- IF THE KRYPTONIAN WINS THIS CONTEST...)
(... HE FIGHTS YOUR CHAMPION, DRAAGA!)
(DRAAGA HANDILY WON HIS FIRST BOUT, LORD!)
(I BID YOU TO SPEAK, WARRIOR.)
(GREAT MONGUL -- I OFFER YOU THE HEAD OF MY VANQUISHED FOE, IN OBSERVANCE OF THE RULE OF THE GAMES...)
(I DON'T CARE ABOUT THIS ONE -- HIS KIND ARE LEGION...)
(BRING ME THE HEAD OF THE KRYPTONIAN, SO THAT I MAY FEAST ON HIS EYES -- AND SAVOR THE END OF HIS RACE!)
SLAP!
(LET THE CONTEST RESUME -- THE KRYPTONIAN VERSUS THE MONMOUTH...)
(I'LL WAGER TEN UNITS ON THE KRYPTON-MAN!)
(AND I'LL COVER THOSE ODDS...)


"HE DOESN'T STAND A CHANCE AGAINST THE MONMOUTH!"
THIS GUY'S NOT WASTING ANY TIME AT ALL!
RAAAAAA
WAIT! LISTEN TO ME...
WE DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS! MONGUL DOESN'T OWN US!
ALL OF THE PLAYERS IN THIS "GAME" ARE POWERFUL FIGHTERS...
WE COULD BAND TOGETHER AGAINST MONGUL!
NO! THROUGH COMBAT I EARN RESPECT FOR MY KIND...
SMASH!
GREAT MONGUL GAVE ME THAT CHANCE... URRGH!
MONGUL'S INFLUENCE IS STRONG, IT SEEMS...
I'LL HAVE TO WIN SOME INFLUENCE OF MY OWN, FIGHTING MY WAY!
I THINK MY MICROSCOPIC VISION HAS DETECTED THIS GUY'S ACHILLES' HEEL...

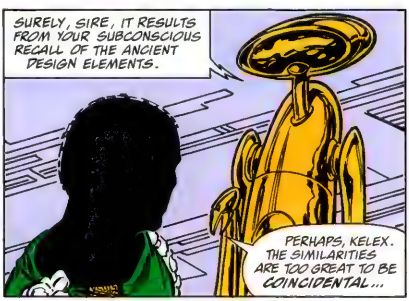
HIS BODY IS MADE UP OF COUNTLESS NUMBERS OF SMALLER BEINGS...
...AND THE FORCE OF MY BLOWS IS STRAINING THEIR ABILITY TO HOLD THEMSELVES TOGETHER...
IF I CAN HIT HIM HARD...
...ENOUGH! I THINK FAST, CLARK!
A BLAST OF WIND SHOULD SPREAD THEM AROUND SO THEY CAN'T RE-COMBINE RIGHT AWAY!
I GUESS THIS MAKES ME THE WINNER. WONDER WHAT CO-- HEY!
...THESE FELLOWS DON'T LOOK TOO HEALTHY--MAYBE THEY CAN'T SURVIVE SEPARATELY IN THIS ATMOSPHERE!
(AGAIN, THE KRYPTON-MAN DOES NOT KILL!)
(THE MONMOUTH WOULD HAVE PERISHED, BUT THE KRYPTONIAN IS GATHERING TOGETHER ITS MANY PARTS!)
(I STILL WIN THE WAGER!)
(KNOW THIS --MONGUL WILL NOT LET HIM LIVE, WHEN HE DEFEATS DRAAGA!)

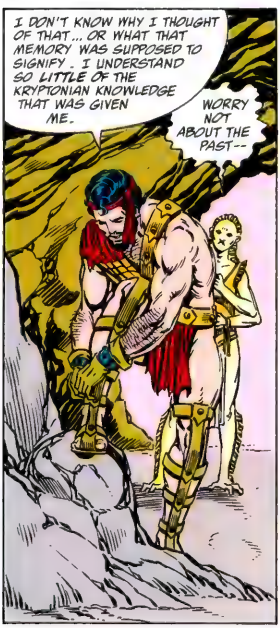

"(CLERIC, I DON'T REMEMBER EVER SEEING THAT STRUCTURE BEFORE.)"
"(BECAUSE I HAD HERETOFORE NEVER SHOWN IT TO YOU.)
"(THERE, CELLKEEPER, IS THE TEMPLE OF THE DIVINE DEITY.)
"(IN ITS HEART, WE PRAYED TOGETHER, SAVORING THE BENEFICENT TEACHINGS OF THE HOLY WORD. IT WAS A CAUTIOUS TIME. MY DISCIPLES WERE WELL AWARE OF THE DANGERS FROM WITHOUT.)
"(IN THIS HERETIC ALLIANCE, THE SCIENTISTS INVOKED RAO'S NAME AS THE PROPONENT-- IN FACT, GREATOR-- OF THE CLONING CONCEPT. AMAZING HOW GOD CREATES SCIENTIST-- WHO IN TURN RECREATE GOD.)
"(THE SCIENCE COUNCIL HAD OBTAINED THE SUPPORT OF THE FOLLOWERS OF RAO, THE PLANET'S OFFICIAL, HEATHEN RELIGION.)
"(AS IT WAS ON SO MANY OTHER WORLDS, THE FOLLOWERS OF THE DIVINE DEITY BECAME OUTCASTS, PERSECUTED FOR THEIR BELIEFS.)
"(ALTHOUGH THE RAOIST PRIESTS SHOWED NO HIGH REGARD FOR THE CLONING ABOMINATION, THEY FOUND THE WORDS OF THE DIVINE DEITY TO BE AN EVEN GREATER THREAT.)
"(I KNEW THAT THE TIME OF THE GREAT PROCLAMATION WAS AT HAND. MY MISSION WAS ALMOST COMPLETE. ON THIS DAY I GATHERED THE FAITHFUL TO THE TEMPLE, SO THAT THEY MIGHT HEAR THE MOST HOLY OF PRONOUNCEMENTS.)
"(BUT, IT WAS NOT FATED TO BE THAT DAY.)"
(HOLY ONE! YOU MUST RUN! ESCAPE!
(THE SCIENCE COUNCIL! THERE IS GREAT DANGER!)


〈PEACE NOW, SYRA. I'VE FACED THE COUNCIL'S WRATH BEFORE.〉
〈BUT, THIS IS DIFFERENT, HOLY ONE.〉
〈I BEG YOU, BEAR WITNESS TO MY MIND--SO THAT YOU CAN SEE.〉
〈SO THAT YOU ALL CAN SEE!〉
"〈I LEARNED OF THE PLOT WHILE PERFORMING MY DUTIES AS REGULATOR OF THE COUNCIL'S ROBOT DATA-BANKS!〉
"〈THEY'VE DEVISED A STRANGE NEW WEAPON, LIKE NOTHING I HAVE EVER SEEN BEFORE. THEY CALLED IT THE ERADICATOR.〉
"〈THE DATA-BANKS VERIFIED THAT ITS POWER IS BEYOND THE MEASURE OF ALL KNOWN SCALES.〉
"〈HOLY ONE, THEY MEAN TO KILL YOU WITH IT!〉"
〈NO! THEY SHALL NOT KILL OUR TEACHER!〉
〈WE WILL DESTROY THE COUNCIL! DEATH TO THEM ALL!〉
"〈VIOLENCE WAS NEVER THE WAY OF THE DIVINE DEITY. I TRIED TO STILL THE RAGE WITHIN THEIR COLLECTIVE BREASTS, BUT, FOR ONCE, MY WORDS FAILED TO MOVE THEM.〉
"〈AT LEAST, MOST OF THEM.〉"
〈SEN-M, I WILL LEAD AN ASSAULT ON THE MAIN SCIENCE HALL. ARE YOU WITH US?〉
〈DON'T YOU HEAR THE PRIEST'S WORDS, SYRA? WE'RE PLAYING RIGHT INTO THE COUNCIL'S HANDS.〉
〈THE COUNCIL HAS SHOWN THAT PEACEFUL WORDS HAVE NO WEIGHT WITH TO THEM.〉
〈IF THIS PERSECUTION IS TO END, IT IS WE WHO MUST END IT--IN BLOOD!〉
"〈SYRA'S WORDS BURNED LIKE A FEVER.〉
"〈AS THE TEMPLE WALLS RUMBLED WITH THE ECHOES OF ANGER AND INDIGNATION, I STARED AT THE FADING IMAGE OF THE ERADICATOR...〉
"〈...SCIENCE AT ITS MOST OBSCENE.〉


"KRYPTONIAN SCIENCE WAS JUST SHORT OF MAGIC BY JOR-EL'S TIME.
"WHEN I THINK OF HIM, IT'S AS IF I CAN ACTUALLY SEE HIM IN HIS LABORATORY..."
AMAZING!
AMAZING, MY LORD?
YES, KELEX--THE HYPER-LIGHT DRIVE VEHICLE I HAVE DESIGNED...

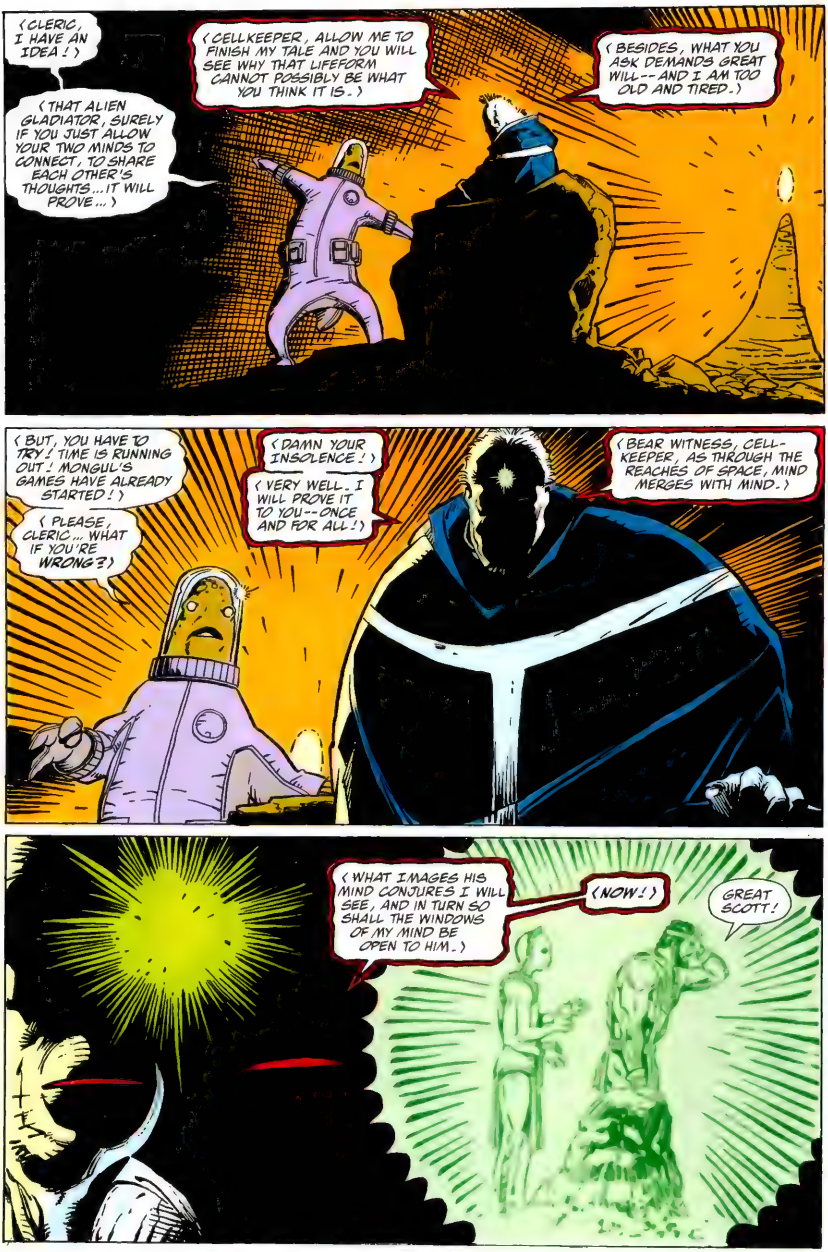
...I DID NOT INTEND IT SO, BUT THIS CONFIGURATION IS REMARKABLY SIMILAR TO THAT OF A LEGENDARY MACHINE SUPPOSEDLY CONSTRUCTED DURING THE FIFTH HISTORIC EPOCH.
THE PURPOSES OF THE MACHINE--IF IT TRULY DID EXIST--ARE LOST TO ANTIQUITY. THAT MY WORK SHOULD SO RESEMBLE THAT OF THE ANCIENTS IS UNCANNY.


SURELY, SIRE, IT RESULTS FROM YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS RECALL OF THE ANCIENT DESIGN ELEMENTS.
PERHAPS, KELEX. THE SIMILARITIES ARE TOO GREAT TO BE COINCIDENTAL...


I DON'T KNOW WHY I THOUGHT OF THAT... OR WHAT THAT MEMORY WAS SUPPOSED TO SIGNIFY. I UNDERSTAND SO LITTLE OF THE KRYPTONIAN KNOWLEDGE THAT WAS GIVEN ME.
WORRY NOT ABOUT THE PAST--

--CONCENTRATE INSTEAD ON YOUR FUTURE. WHEN YOU RETURN TO THE FIELD, YOU WILL FACE DRAAGA!
HE IS MONGUL'S CHAMPION--IF YOU DO NOT KILL HIM, YOU MUST DIE!
I MUST DIE, WHATEVER I DO...

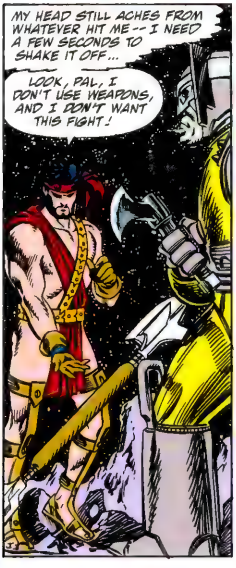
...NONE OF US LIVE FOREVER.
?!?!


(CLERIC, I HAVE AN IDEA!)
(THAT ALIEN GLADIATOR, SURELY IF YOU JUST ALLOW YOUR TWO MINDS TO CONNECT, TO SHARE EACH OTHER'S THOUGHTS... IT WILL PROVE...)
(CELLKEEPER, ALLOW ME TO FINISH MY TALE AND YOU WILL SEE WHY THAT LIFEFORM CANNOT POSSIBLY BE WHAT YOU THINK IT IS.)
(BESIDES, WHAT YOU ASK DEMANDS GREAT WILL--AND I AM TOO OLD AND TIRED.)
(BUT, YOU HAVE TO TRY! TIME IS RUNNING OUT! MONGUL'S GAMES HAVE ALREADY STARTED!)
(PLEASE, CLERIC... WHAT IF YOU'RE WRONG?)
(DAMN YOUR INSOLENCE!)
(VERY WELL. I WILL PROVE IT TO YOU--ONCE AND FOR ALL!)
(BEAR WITNESS, CELL-KEEPER, AS THROUGH THE REACHES OF SPACE, MIND MERGES WITH MIND.)
(WHAT IMAGES HIS MIND CONJURES I WILL SEE, AND IN TURN SO SHALL THE WINDOWS OF MY MIND BE OPEN TO HIM.)
(NOW!)
GREAT SCOTT!

WHAT IS THE MATTER?
IMAGES... SENSATIONS... ARE BOMBARDING MY MIND! IS THIS SOME SORT OF CONDITIONING FOR THE GAMES?
I KNOW OF NO SUCH--!
WARRIORS TO THE FIELD! THE FINAL CONTEST COMMENCES!
(CLERIC? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?)
(THE DIVINE DEITY FORGIVE ME-- WHAT HAVE I DONE?)
(CLERIC!)
(THE LINK... IS FORMED... THERE CAN BE NO... TURNING BACK...)
(WE... ARE ...ONE...)

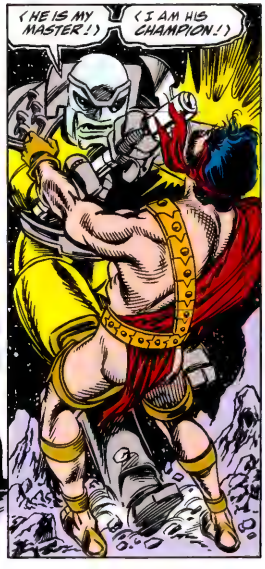
(HEAR ME! IN THIS, THE FINAL CONTEST, MY CHAMPION SHALL EMERGE!)
(DEVIATION FROM THE RULES WILL NOT BE TOLERATED! THE VICTOR MUST KILL HIS OPPONENT AND PRESENT HIS HEAD TO ME!)

(LET THE GAME COMMENCE!)
TO THE DEATH!
TO THE DEATH!
TO THE DEATH!

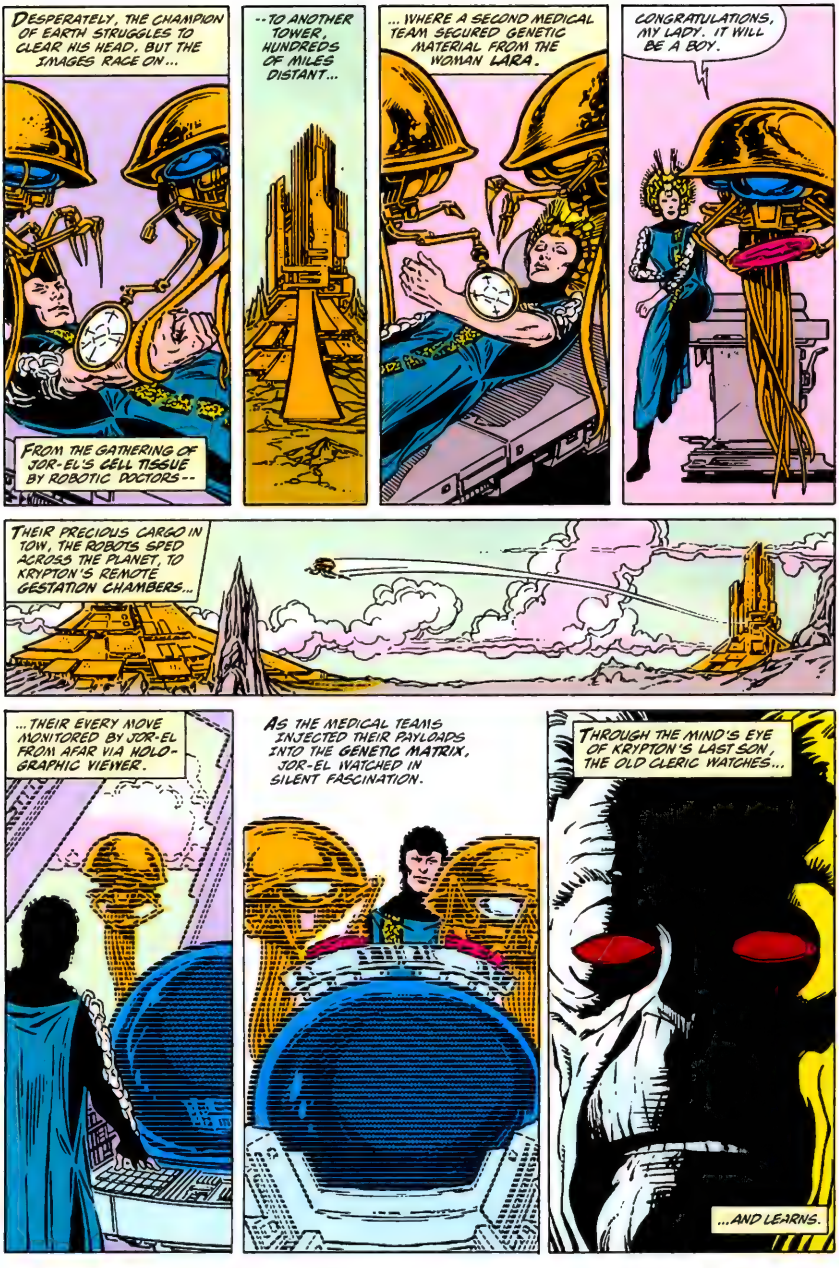

MY HEAD STILL ACHES FROM WHATEVER HIT ME -- I NEED A FEW SECONDS TO SHAKE IT OFF...
LOOK, PAL, I DON'T USE WEAPONS, AND I DON'T WANT THIS FIGHT!

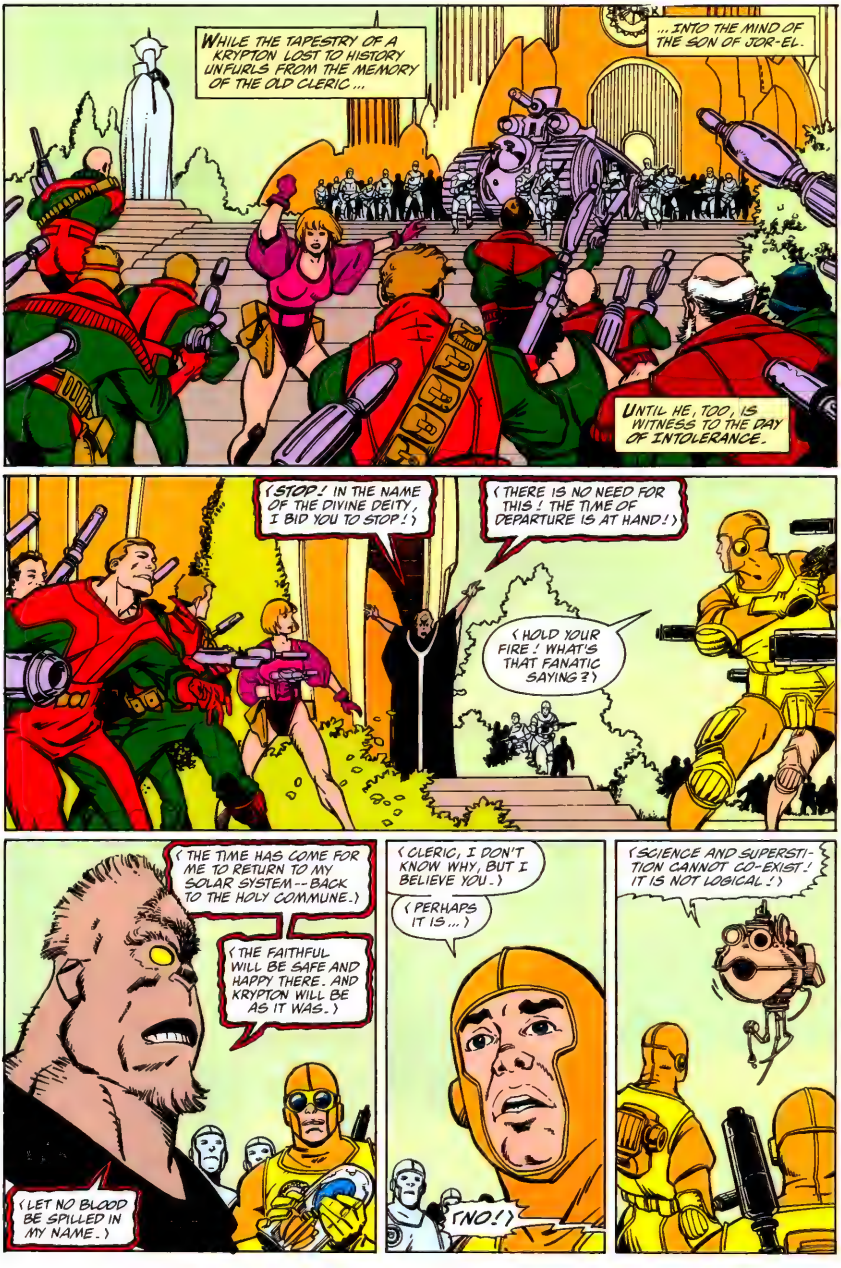
DON'T YOU REALIZE HOW YOU'RE BEING USED? MONGUL HAS NO DIVINE HOLD OVER YOU! WE CAN LIBERATE THE OTHERS--
--DEPOSE THE TYRANT!

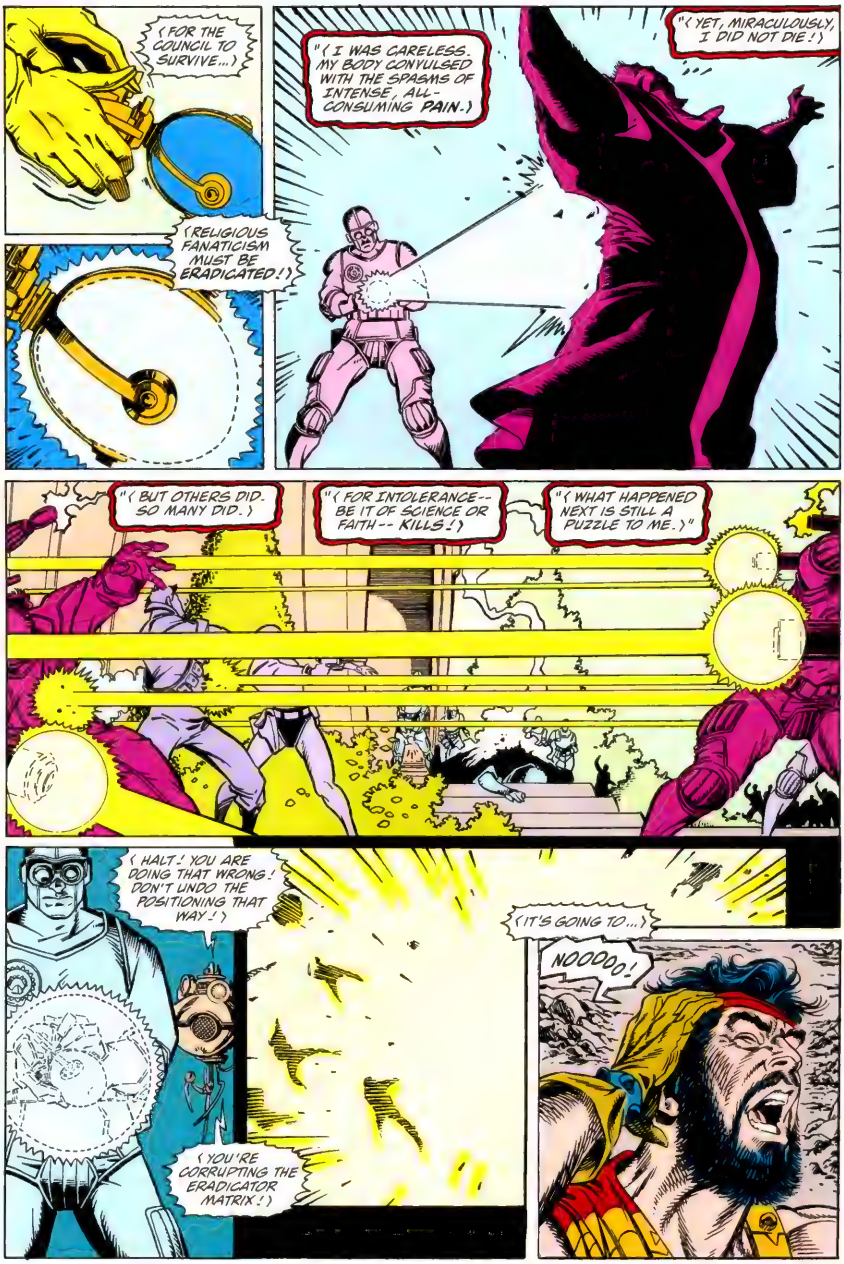
(MONGUL IS CRUEL...)
(HE COMMITS MANY ATROCITIES...)
JOIN WITH ME AGAINST HIM!


(HE IS MY MASTER!)
(I AM HIS CHAMPION!)

GUNNGH!! SHOULDN'T HAVE FALLEN FOR SUCH AN OBVIOUS PLOY... BUT MY HEAD... SO MIXED UP.
FEELS AS IF... SOMEONE'S FLIPPING THROUGH MY MEMORIES...
THE PROCEDURE CALLS FOR ONLY MOMENTARY EXPOSURE OF THE EPIDERMAL LAYER, JOR-EL. I CAN ASSURE YOU THERE WILL BE NO DISCOMFORT.
I AM NOT WORRIED, KELEX... BUT I AM EXCITED! HOW COULD I NOT BE?
TODAY, BY THE GRACE OF FATE AND THE WILL OF KRYPTON'S ELDERS, I AM TO FATHER A CHILD...
...PERHAPS THE HEALTHIEST CHILD KRYPTON HAS EVER KNOWN!
THERE IS NO QUESTION OF THAT! YOUR GENETIC PATTERN AND THAT OF THE LADY LARA WERE DETERMINED TO BE THE TWO STRONGEST ON KRYPTON!
THAT MATTERS LITTLE IN THE GREATER SCHEME OF THINGS, KELEX.
ALL THE BLOODLINES OF KRYPTON, I HAVE DISCOVERED, POSSESS A FLAW ...BUT IF MY CALCULATIONS ARE CORRECT--
--THE TREATMENTS I HAVE TAKEN WILL CORRECT THAT FLAW IN MY PROGENY.
AND MY CHILD WILL INHERIT THE COSMOS!


DESPERATELY, THE CHAMPION OF EARTH STRUGGLES TO CLEAR HIS HEAD, BUT THE IMAGES RACE ON...
FROM THE GATHERING OF JOR-EL'S CELL TISSUE BY ROBOTIC DOCTORS--
--TO ANOTHER TOWER, HUNDREDS OF MILES DISTANT...
...WHERE A SECOND MEDICAL TEAM SECURED GENETIC MATERIAL FROM THE WOMAN LARA.
CONGRATULATIONS, MY LADY. IT WILL BE A BOY.
THEIR PRECIOUS CARGO IN TOW, THE ROBOTS SPED ACROSS THE PLANET, TO KRYPTON'S REMOTE GESTATION CHAMBERS...
...THEIR EVERY MOVE MONITORED BY JOR-EL FROM AFAR VIA HOLOGRAPHIC VIEWER.
AS THE MEDICAL TEAMS INJECTED THEIR PAYLOADS INTO THE GENETIC MATRIX, JOR-EL WATCHED IN SILENT FASCINATION.
THROUGH THE MIND'S EYE OF KRYPTON'S LAST SON, THE OLD CLERIC WATCHES...
...AND LEARNS.

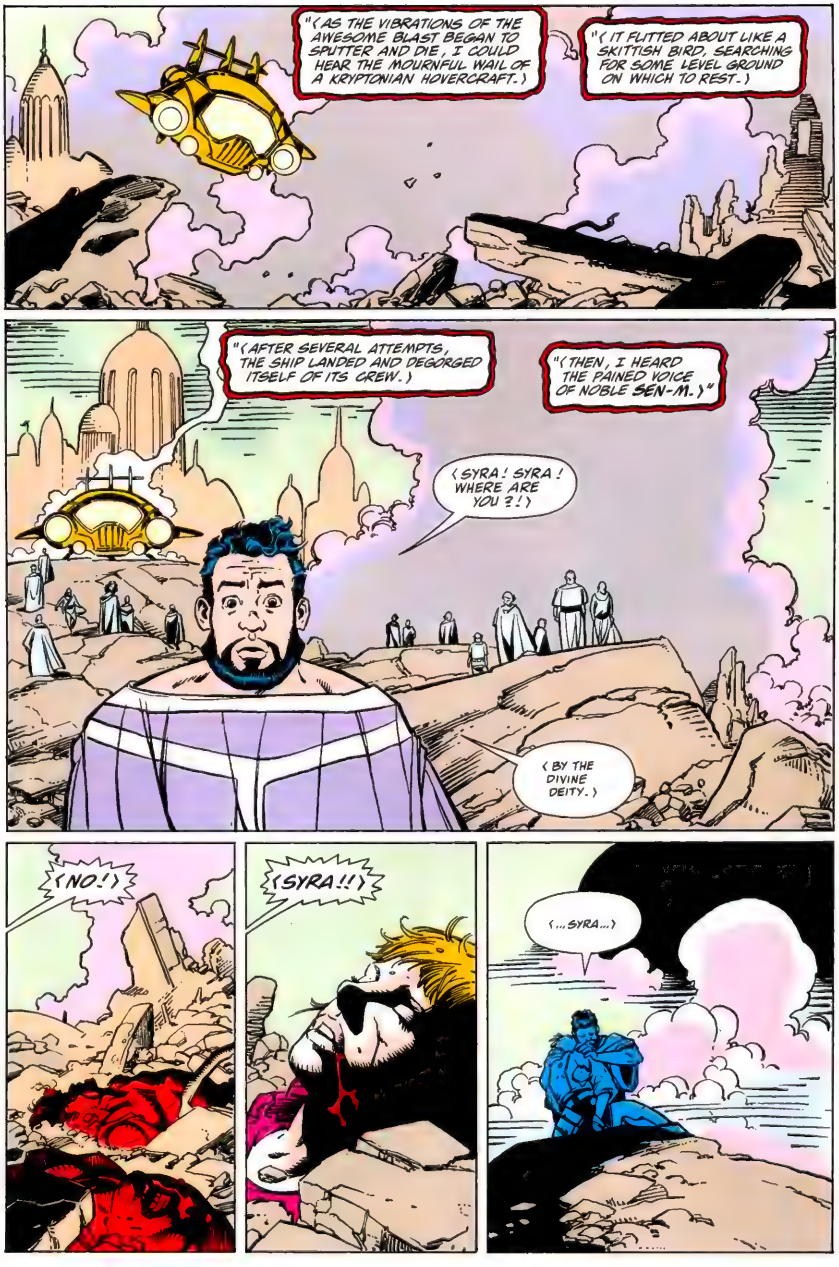

WHILE THE TAPESTRY OF A KRYPTON LOST TO HISTORY UNFURLS FROM THE MEMORY OF THE OLD CLERIC ...
... INTO THE MIND OF THE SON OF JOR-EL.
UNTIL HE, TOO, IS WITNESS TO THE DAY OF INTOLERANCE.
(STOP! IN THE NAME OF THE DIVINE DEITY, I BID YOU TO STOP!)
(THERE IS NO NEED FOR THIS! THE TIME OF DEPARTURE IS AT HAND!)
(HOLD YOUR FIRE! WHAT'S THAT FANATIC SAYING?)
(THE TIME HAS COME FOR ME TO RETURN TO MY SOLAR SYSTEM--BACK TO THE HOLY COMMUNE.)
(THE FAITHFUL WILL BE SAFE AND HAPPY THERE. AND KRYPTON WILL BE AS IT WAS.)
(LET NO BLOOD BE SPILLED IN MY NAME.)
(CLERIC, I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT I BELIEVE YOU.)
(PERHAPS IT IS...)
(NO!)
(SCIENCE AND SUPERSTITION CANNOT CO-EXIST! IT IS NOT LOGICAL!)

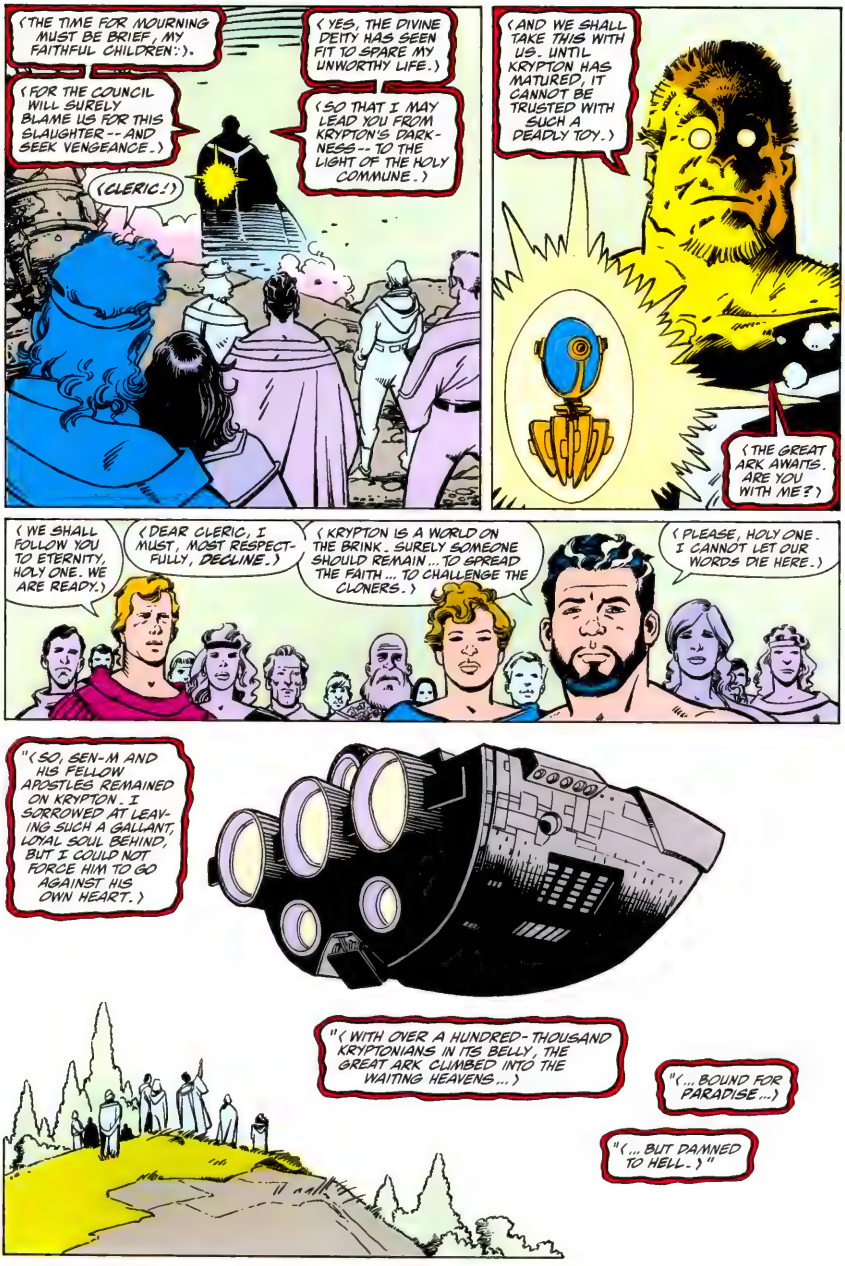

(FOR THE COUNCIL TO SURVIVE...)
(RELIGIOUS FANATICISM MUST BE ERADICATED!)
"(I WAS CARELESS. MY BODY CONVULSED WITH THE SPASMS OF INTENSE, ALL-CONSUMING PAIN.)
"(YET, MIRACULOUSLY, I DID NOT DIE!)
"(BUT OTHERS DID. SO MANY DID.)
"(FOR INTOLERANCE-- BE IT OF SCIENCE OR FAITH-- KILLS!)
"(WHAT HAPPENED NEXT IS STILL A PUZZLE TO ME.)"
(HALT! YOU ARE DOING THAT WRONG! DON'T UNDO THE POSITIONING THAT WAY!)
(YOU'RE CORRUPTING THE ERADICATOR MATRIX!)
(IT'S GOING TO...)
NOOOOO!

DRAAGA!
DRAAGA!
⟨THE KRYPTON-MAN IS DISTRACTED, TIRED!⟩
⟨DRAAGA IS A GREAT CHAMPION!⟩
⟨TOO GOOD IT SEEMS...⟩
("...I TIRE OF HIM -- IT WOULD BE EXCITING TO SEE HIM DEFEATED!")
⟨YOUR REFUSAL TO KILL IS YOUR WEAKNESS!⟩
⟨YOUR RACE DESERVES EXTINCTION!⟩
⟨A RACE OF COWARDS WHO DO NOT MERIT A WARRIOR'S DEATH!⟩

(YES! STAND AND FACE ME...)
(...THIS ENDS NOW!)
IT'S JUST STARTED, DRAAGA!
(YAAARGH!)
NO WEAPONS-- HAND TO HAND COMBAT!
AND WHERE DO YOU GET OFF CALLING ME A COWARD...
...WHEN YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S AFRAID TO STAND UP TO MONGUL?
("THIS HAS TURNED OUT TO BE A WORTHY MATCH AFTER ALL. THE CHALLENGER HAS BEEN FEIGNING WEAKNESS UNTIL NOW!")

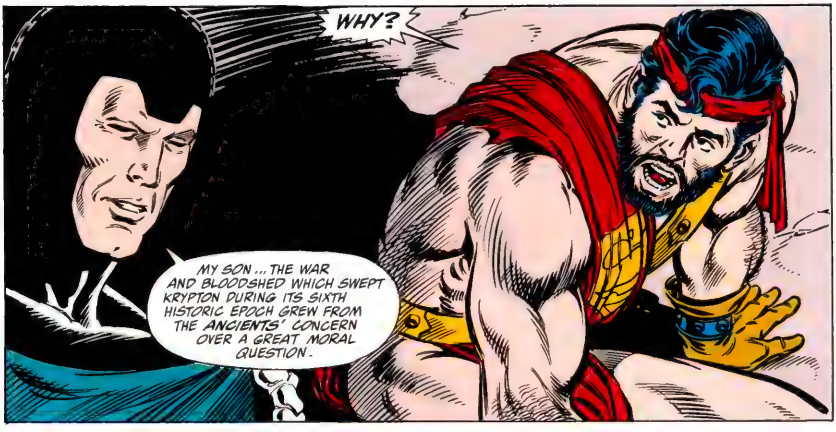
(HE'S AFTER BLOOD!)
(HE'LL KILL!)
(TEN UNITS SAYS HE WON'T!)
(DRAAGA IS NOT DEFEATED YET! HE'LL RALLY!)
("LOOK AT GREAT MONGUL ON HIS THRONE, SMILING, CONFIDENT IN HIS CHAMPION.")
THE SLAVE HAS THE FIRE AFTER ALL-- DRAAGA MERELY NEEDED TO PROVOKE...)
("... MY SUBJECTS ARE ENTRANCED! THE KRYPTONIAN MUST DIE-- IF NOT BY DRAAGA'S HAND, THEN BY MINE!")
(IT IS DANGEROUS FOR MY CHARGE, WHEN THE CROWDS BACK HIM...)
(THEY SEAL HIS FATE! MONGUL WILL NOT BE CHALLENGED BY HIS POPULARITY!)
MY HEAD! NOT AGAIN--
--IMAGES FLOODING IN-- A SMOKING RUINS...

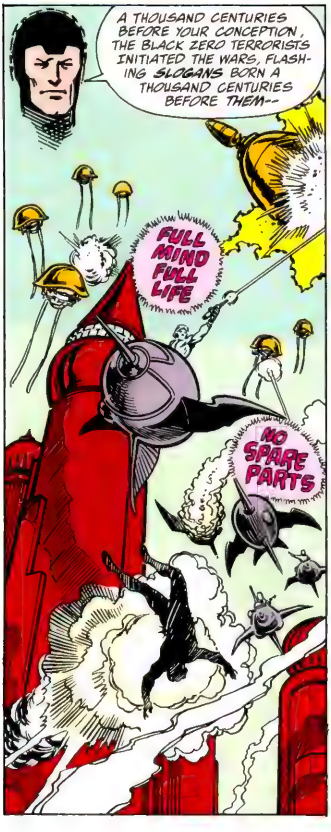

"(AS THE VIBRATIONS OF THE AWESOME BLAST BEGAN TO SPUTTER AND DIE, I COULD HEAR THE MOURNFUL WAIL OF A KRYPTONIAN HOVERCRAFT.)
"(IT FLITTED ABOUT LIKE A SKITTISH BIRD, SEARCHING FOR SOME LEVEL GROUND ON WHICH TO REST.)
"(AFTER SEVERAL ATTEMPTS, THE SHIP LANDED AND DEGORGED ITSELF OF ITS CREW.)
"(THEN, I HEARD THE PAINED VOICE OF NOBLE SEN-M.)"
(SYRA! SYRA! WHERE ARE YOU?!)
(BY THE DIVINE DEITY.)
(NO!)
(SYRA!!)
(...SYRA...)

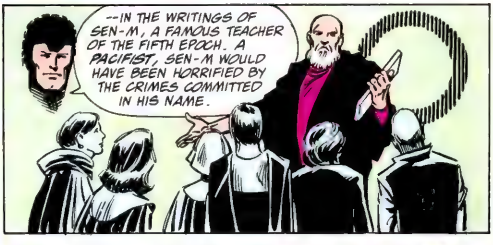

(THE TIME FOR MOURNING MUST BE BRIEF, MY FAITHFUL CHILDREN:).
(YES, THE DIVINE DEITY HAS SEEN FIT TO SPARE MY UNWORTHY LIFE.)
(FOR THE COUNCIL WILL SURELY BLAME US FOR THIS SLAUGHTER -- AND SEEK VENGEANCE.)
(SO THAT I MAY LEAD YOU FROM KRYPTON'S DARKNESS -- TO THE LIGHT OF THE HOLY COMMUNE.)
(CLERIC!)
(AND WE SHALL TAKE THIS WITH US. UNTIL KRYPTON HAS MATURED, IT CANNOT BE TRUSTED WITH SUCH A DEADLY TOY.)
(THE GREAT ARK AWAITS. ARE YOU WITH ME?)
(WE SHALL FOLLOW YOU TO ETERNITY, HOLY ONE. WE ARE READY.)
(DEAR CLERIC, I MUST, MOST RESPECTFULLY, DECLINE.)
(KRYPTON IS A WORLD ON THE BRINK. SURELY SOMEONE SHOULD REMAIN... TO SPREAD THE FAITH... TO CHALLENGE THE CLONERS.)
(PLEASE, HOLY ONE. I CANNOT LET OUR WORDS DIE HERE.)
"(SO, SEN-M AND HIS FELLOW APOSTLES REMAINED ON KRYPTON. I SORROWED AT LEAVING SUCH A GALLANT, LOYAL SOUL BEHIND, BUT I COULD NOT FORCE HIM TO GO AGAINST HIS OWN HEART.)
"(WITH OVER A HUNDRED-THOUSAND KRYPTONIANS IN ITS BELLY, THE GREAT ARK CLIMBED INTO THE WAITING HEAVENS...)
"(...BOUND FOR PARADISE...)
"(...BUT DAMNED TO HELL.)"

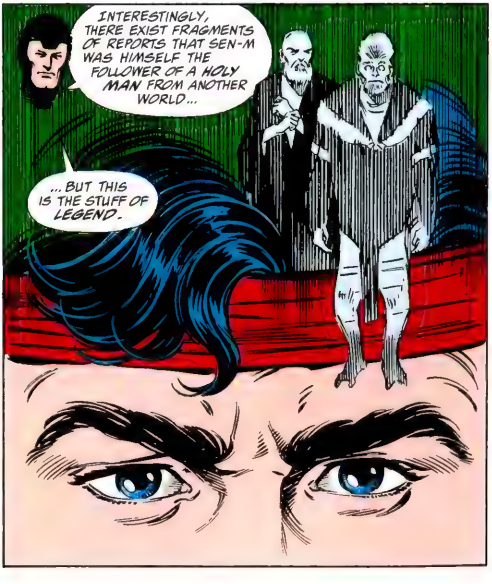
"THE SHIP--SO HUGE. WHY DON'T I REMEMBER?
"MY FATHER TOLD OF KRYPTON'S HISTORY, BUT THIS IMAGE IS NOT HIS!"
(YOUR BLOOD MARKS MY FIST, KRYPTONIAN!)
(THE LAST BLOOD OF YOUR LINE, YET YOU HAVE NO FIGHT LEFT FOR ME?)
"THESE ARE NOT MY MEMORIES!"

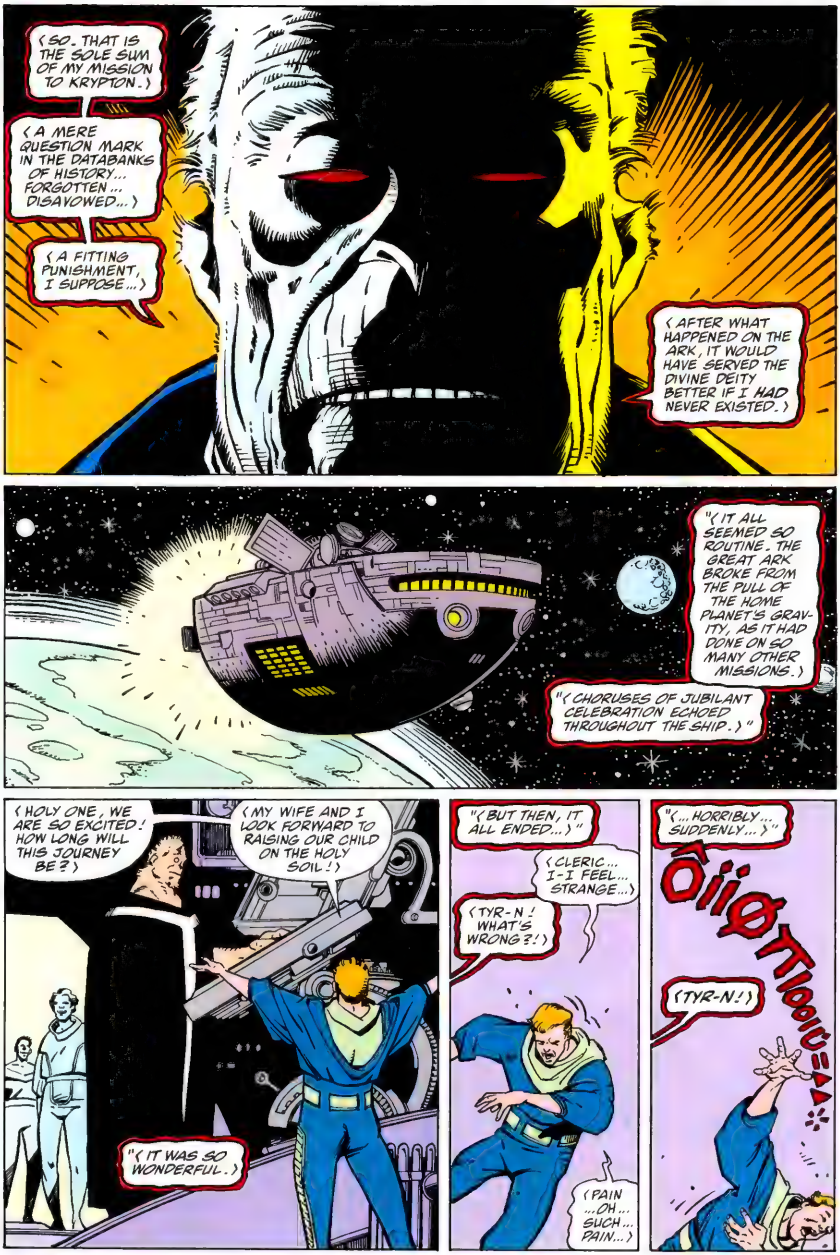
(YOU ALLOW YOURSELF AND YOUR RACE TO BE HUMILIATED HERE...)
"THESE IMAGES ARE HIS, THE INTRUDERS --NOT MY FATHER'S!
"MEMORIES OF THINGS FATHER NEVER TOLD ME..."
(ALREADY THE CROWD CALLS FOR YOUR END!)
"WHY? WHY DID YOU NEVER TELL ME THESE THINGS, FATHER?"
(DRAAGA KNOWS HOW TO PLAY OUT THE MOMENT--MAKE YOU WANT DEATH AS BADLY AS THEY DO!)

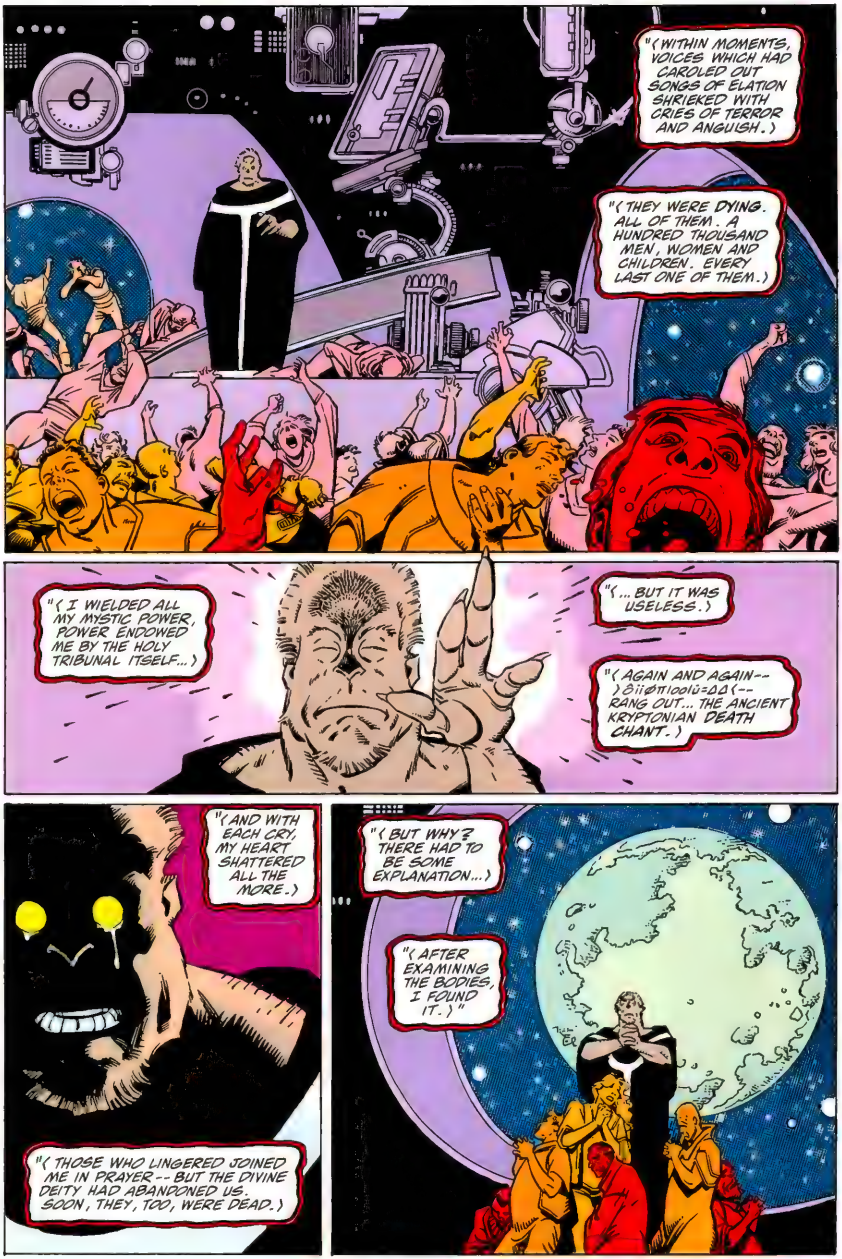

WHY?
MY SON... THE WAR AND BLOODSHED WHICH SWEPT KRYPTON DURING ITS SIXTH HISTORIC EPOCH GREW FROM THE ANCIENTS' CONCERN OVER A GREAT MORAL QUESTION.


A THOUSAND CENTURIES BEFORE YOUR CONCEPTION, THE BLACK ZERO TERRORISTS INITIATED THE WARS, FLASHING SLOGANS BORN A THOUSAND CENTURIES BEFORE THEM--
FULL MIND FULL LIFE
NO SPARE PARTS


--IN THE WRITINGS OF SEN-M, A FAMOUS TEACHER OF THE FIFTH EPOCH. A PACIFIST, SEN-M WOULD HAVE BEEN HORRIFIED BY THE CRIMES COMMITTED IN HIS NAME.


INTERESTINGLY, THERE EXIST FRAGMENTS OF REPORTS THAT SEN-M WAS HIMSELF THE FOLLOWER OF A HOLY MAN FROM ANOTHER WORLD...
...BUT THIS IS THE STUFF OF LEGEND.


(SO. THAT IS THE SOLE SUM OF MY MISSION TO KRYPTON.)
(A MERE QUESTION MARK IN THE DATABANKS OF HISTORY... FORGOTTEN... DISAVOWED...)
(A FITTING PUNISHMENT, I SUPPOSE...)
(AFTER WHAT HAPPENED ON THE ARK, IT WOULD HAVE SERVED THE DIVINE DEITY BETTER IF I HAD NEVER EXISTED.)
"(IT ALL SEEMED SO ROUTINE. THE GREAT ARK BROKE FROM THE PULL OF THE HOME PLANET'S GRAVITY, AS IT HAD DONE ON SO MANY OTHER MISSIONS.)
"(CHORUSES OF JUBILANT CELEBRATION ECHOED THROUGHOUT THE SHIP.)"
(HOLY ONE, WE ARE SO EXCITED! HOW LONG WILL THIS JOURNEY BE?)
(MY WIFE AND I LOOK FORWARD TO RAISING OUR CHILD ON THE HOLY SOIL!)
"(IT WAS SO WONDERFUL.)
"(BUT THEN, IT ALL ENDED...)"
(CLERIC... I-I FEEL... STRANGE...)
(TYR-N! WHAT'S WRONG?!)
(PAIN ...OH... SUCH... PAIN...)
"(...HORRIBLY... SUDDENLY...)"
(TYR-N!)


"(WITHIN MOMENTS, VOICES WHICH HAD CAROLED OUT SONGS OF ELATION SHRIEKED WITH CRIES OF TERROR AND ANGUISH.)
"(THEY WERE DYING. ALL OF THEM. A HUNDRED THOUSAND MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN. EVERY LAST ONE OF THEM.)
"(I WIELDED ALL MY MYSTIC POWER, POWER ENDOWED ME BY THE HOLY TRIBUNAL ITSELF...)
"(...BUT IT WAS USELESS.)
"(AGAIN AND AGAIN--)ðiiØTIööiü=ΔΔ(-- RANG OUT... THE ANCIENT KRYPTONIAN DEATH CHANT.)
"(AND WITH EACH CRY, MY HEART SHATTERED ALL THE MORE.)
"(THOSE WHO LINGERED JOINED ME IN PRAYER-- BUT THE DIVINE DEITY HAD ABANDONED US. SOON, THEY, TOO, WERE DEAD.)
"(BUT WHY? THERE HAD TO BE SOME EXPLANATION...)
"(AFTER EXAMINING THE BODIES, I FOUND IT.)"

"KAL-EL, MY SON, THERE IS A DEFECT IN THE KRYPTONIAN GENOTYPE WHICH HAS TIED US TO THIS PLANET. TO LEAVE OUR WORLD'S ENVIRONS HAS MEANT DEATH.
"TREATMENTS THAT I TOOK PRIOR TO YOUR CONCEPTION HAVE ELIMINATED THAT DEFECT IN YOU. I HAD HOPES THAT YOU WOULD TAKE KRYPTON TO THE STARS, BUT NOW...
"THERE IS MUCH I WOULD SAY TO YOU, AND SO LITTLE TIME.
"OUR ANCESTORS THOUGHT THEY HAD ENDED THE MENACE OF BLACK ZERO EONS AGO. BUT BEFORE ITS DEMISE, THAT CULT HAD TRIGGERED A NUCLEAR DEVICE--
"--WHICH, I BELIEVE, STARTED A CHAIN REACTION DEEP WITHIN OUR PLANET'S CORE, CREATING A NEW AND DEADLY RADIOACTIVE ELEMENT.
"TWENTY MILLION KRYPTONIANS HAVE DIED WITHIN THE PAST CYCLE.
"KRYPTON IS KILLING US.
"TODAY, MY FEARS WERE CONFIRMED.
"KRYPTON ITSELF WILL SOON DIE.
"ONLY YOU CAN ESCAPE OUR DOOM. THESE PAST MONTHS, MY ROBOTS HAVE CONSTRUCTED THE STAR DRIVE I DESIGNED YEARS AGO.
"YOUR MOTHER HAS JOINED ME... SHE KNOWS WHAT I HAVE DONE, AND--IN HER OWN WAY-- I THINK SHE UNDERSTANDS.
"I HAVE BEAMED THIS RECORDING OF MY THOUGHTS AND DREAMS INTO THE VEHICLE WHICH WILL CARRY YOUR BIRTHING MATRIX TO A NEW WORLD, THAT YOU MAY ONE DAY LEARN OF US.
"YOUR MOTHER AND I SHALL FACE DEATH TOGETHER IN PRAYER..."
"REMEMBER US.
"FAREWELL."

(STAND AND ACCEPT DEATH, KRYPTONIAN!)
Ôïïøπ œï ü=ΔΔ
DEATH?
TOO MUCH DEATH -- MY MOTHER, MY FATHER...
MY WHOLE PLANET DIED!
I'M THE SOLE HEIR OF KRYPTON...
...HER LAST SON!
I AM KAL-EL!

"WHILE KRYPTON WENT TO ITS DOOM, I ALONE SURVIVED--
"--SENT ACROSS SPACE TO EARTH...
"...THERE TO BE BORN AND RAISED A MAN!"
(I HAD DISGRACED MY FAITH. I COULDN'T GO BACK TO THE COMMUNE.)
(SO I CAME HERE, AND BECAME AS THE ROCK--COLD AND LIFELESS. AND EONS OLD.)
(AND DURING ALL THOSE EONS, THE ERADICATOR HAS REMAINED WITH ME. I NEVER REALLY KNEW WHY I'D KEPT IT FOR SO LONG.)
(BUT NOW, IT IS ALL CLEAR.)

〈YOU HAVE VANQUISHED MY CHAMPION, SLAVE! NOW KILL HIM AND HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF PRESENTING TO ME HIS HEAD!〉
MY NAME, TYRANT, IS SUPERMAN-- AND I DON'T KILL!

(THE ERADICATOR AND THE MATRIX-CRAFT--THE RESEMBLANCE IS NOT A COINCIDENCE. AND THE KRYPTONIAN DEATH CRY...)
(YOUR REFUSAL LEAVES ME NO RECOURSE BUT TO KILL YOU BOTH MYSELF!)
I'M NOT AFRAID OF YOU, MONGUL! COME DOWN FROM THAT THRONE OF YOURS AND FACE ME ONE ON ONE!
(IT'S TRUE! AFTER ALL THESE CENTURIES, MY PRAYERS HAVE FINALLY BEEN ANSWERED!)
(HEAR ME, LAST SON OF KRYPTON! AND BEAR WITNESS TO ...YOUR DESTINY!)
TO BE CONTINUED IN THE PAGES OF SUPERMAN #32!
ON SALE NEXT WEEK!

WAR IS NOT AN EXCLUSIVELY HUMAN INVENTION.
WHILE OUR TINY WORLD WAS STUMBLING TOWARD ITS FIRST GLOBAL BATTLES...
... A GALAXY AWAY, AN ENTIRE PLANETARY SYSTEM FELL BEFORE THE ONSLAUGHT OF MONSTROUS DEATH MACHINES!

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EACH BESIEGED WORLD MARSHALED ITS ARMIES TO REPEL THE INVADING FORCE. BUT THOUGH THEY FOUGHT VALIANTLY--

--THEY WERE OVERWHELMED BY SUPERIOR POWER AND ARMAMENT.

THE INVADING WARLORD SWEPT ACROSS DOZENS OF WORLDS IN AS MANY DAYS--

--DEMANDING UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER IN THE NAME OF HIS DAWNING EMPIRE.

HIS NAME WAS MONGUL.

THE MORE DEFIANT WORLDS, HE RENDERED LIFELESS. IN TIME, THE SURVIVORS OF A SCORE OF STAR-SYSTEMS CALLED HIM MASTER!

ON EACH CONQUERED WORLD, THE SOLDIERS WERE INTERNED AND THE LITERATE PUT TO DEATH. THE STRONGEST OF BACK AND WEAKEST OF MIND BECAME THE SLAVE LABOR OF MONGUL'S EMPIRE...

...WHILE THE GREATEST WARRIORS WERE TRANSPORTED TO A DESOLATE PLANETOID, THERE TO FIGHT TO THE DEATH FOR THE AMUSEMENT OF THE EMPEROR AND HIS SUBJECTS.

OVER THE YEARS, THOUSANDS DIED IN THESE GREAT GAMES -- WHILE MONGUL EXPANDED HIS EMPIRE ACROSS THE STARS, ALL BUT UNCHALLENGED.

MERE DAYS AGO, A NEW FACTOR ENTERED MONGUL'S EMPIRE...

CHANCED UPON BY A PASSING SLAVE SHIP, THE DRIFTING BODY WAS RETRIEVED --

-- ROUTINELY SEARCHED FOR VALUABLES, AND TOSSED IN AMONG THE OTHER CAPTIVES.

< TURN THE DRIFTER OVER -- I WILL HAVE HIS BRIGHTLY HUED TUNIC.! >

BUT THE STRANGER YET LIVED...

STILL, HE HAD BEEN GREATLY WEAKENED BY HIS ORDEAL IN SPACE, AND WAS NO MATCH FOR THE POWER PRODS OF HIS CAPTORS...

<BREAK IT UP, YOU TWO! YOU'VE EARNED THE CUFFS!>

THE NEW CAPTIVE WAS SENT TO MONGUL'S PRISON WORLD, THERE TO BE EXAMINED AND PREPARED FOR THE GAMES.

THE STRANGER'S ORIGINS SEEMED TO IMPRESS THE EXAMINING CELLKEEPER--

-; CLICK! : LIFE FORM IDENTIFIED-- KRYPTONIAN-- RACE PREVIOUSLY BELIEVED TO BE EXTINCT...

--AND HE PLACED THE STRANGER IN THE CARE OF HIS MOST TRUSTED ATTENDANT, A FEMALE NAMED LENTRA...

I UNDERSTAND YOUR WISH TO WEAR YOUR FAMILY EMBLEM, WARRIOR...

...BUT SKILL WILL SERVE YOU BETTER. IN THE GAMES, THE SOLE RULE IS TO KILL OR BE KILLED!

BUT THE STRANGER REFUSED TO FOLLOW RULES. IN ROUND AFTER ROUND OF COMBAT, HE SUBDUED HIS OPPONENTS WITHOUT DELIVERING A KILLING BLOW.

FINALLY, HE WAS SENT TO FACE MONGUL'S GREATEST CHAMPION, DRAAGA.

EVERY MOMENT OF THE CONTEST WAS WATCHED INTENTLY BY THE MULTITUDES WITHIN MONGUL'S "WARLORD" COLONY SHIP.

THEIR BATTLE RAGED ACROSS THE BARREN PLANETOID, BUT IN THE END, DRAAGA FELL--AND A NEW CHAMPION STOOD TRIUMPHANT!

GLADIATOR

<YOU HAVE VANQUISHED MY CHAMPION, SLAVE! NOW KILL HIM AND HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF PRESENTING TO ME HIS HEAD!>

MY NAME, TYRANT, IS

SUPERMAN

--

ROGER STERN · writer
KERRY GAMMILL & DENNIS JANKE · artists
JOHN COSTANZA · letterer
GLENN WHITMORE · colorist

MIKE CARLIN · editor
JERRY ORDWAY & GEORGE PÉREZ · co-conspirators
Superman created by JERRY SIEGEL & JOE SHUSTER

--AND I DON'T KILL!

<YOUR REFUSAL LEAVES ME NO RECOURSE BUT TO KILL YOU BOTH MYSELF!>

I AM NOT AFRAID OF YOU, MONGUL! COME DOWN OFF THAT *THRONE* OF YOURS AND *FACE* ME ONE ON ONE!

WHILE, DEEP WITHIN A CAVERNOUS ASTEROID ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE PLANETOID...

<HEAR ME, LAST SON OF KRYPTON!>

<AND BEAR WITNESS TO... YOUR DESTINY!>

<CLERIC--!>

<CELLKEEPER, I AM IN YOUR **DEBT**. YOU MADE ME AWARE OF THIS KRYPTONIAN, THIS **SUPERMAN**. I HAVE LOOKED INTO HIS MIND AND SEEN THAT HE IS THE REASON I HAVE LIVED ALL THESE EONS...>

<...HE AND THIS HALLOWED ARTIFACT. HE HAS A MOST IMPORTANT DESTINY! PRAY YOU, DO NOT INTERRUPT ME NOW!>

<CLERIC, IF YOUR KRYPTONIAN CONTINUES TO DEFY MONGUL...>

"<... HE WON'T REMAIN IMPORTANT-- OR ALIVE--MUCH LONGER!>"

<DID YOU HEAR HIM?!>

<STILL THE COWARD REFUSES TO KILL!>

<COWARD?! HE CHALLENGED MONGUL HIMSELF!>

< NO SENTIENT DEFIES THE WILL OF MONGUL!

< I COULD HAVE STRUCK YOU DEAD IN ANY OF A DOZEN WAYS! BUT AS YOU FOOLISHLY FANCY YOURSELF MY EQUAL, YOU SHALL, INDEED--

(-- PERISH--)

=?!?= HE TELEPORTED HERE FROM HIS WARWORLD *INSTANTANEOUSLY!* BUT IT MUST BE THOUSANDS OF MILES AWAY! I HAD NO IDEA--!

(-- BY MY HAND!)

KER RUK

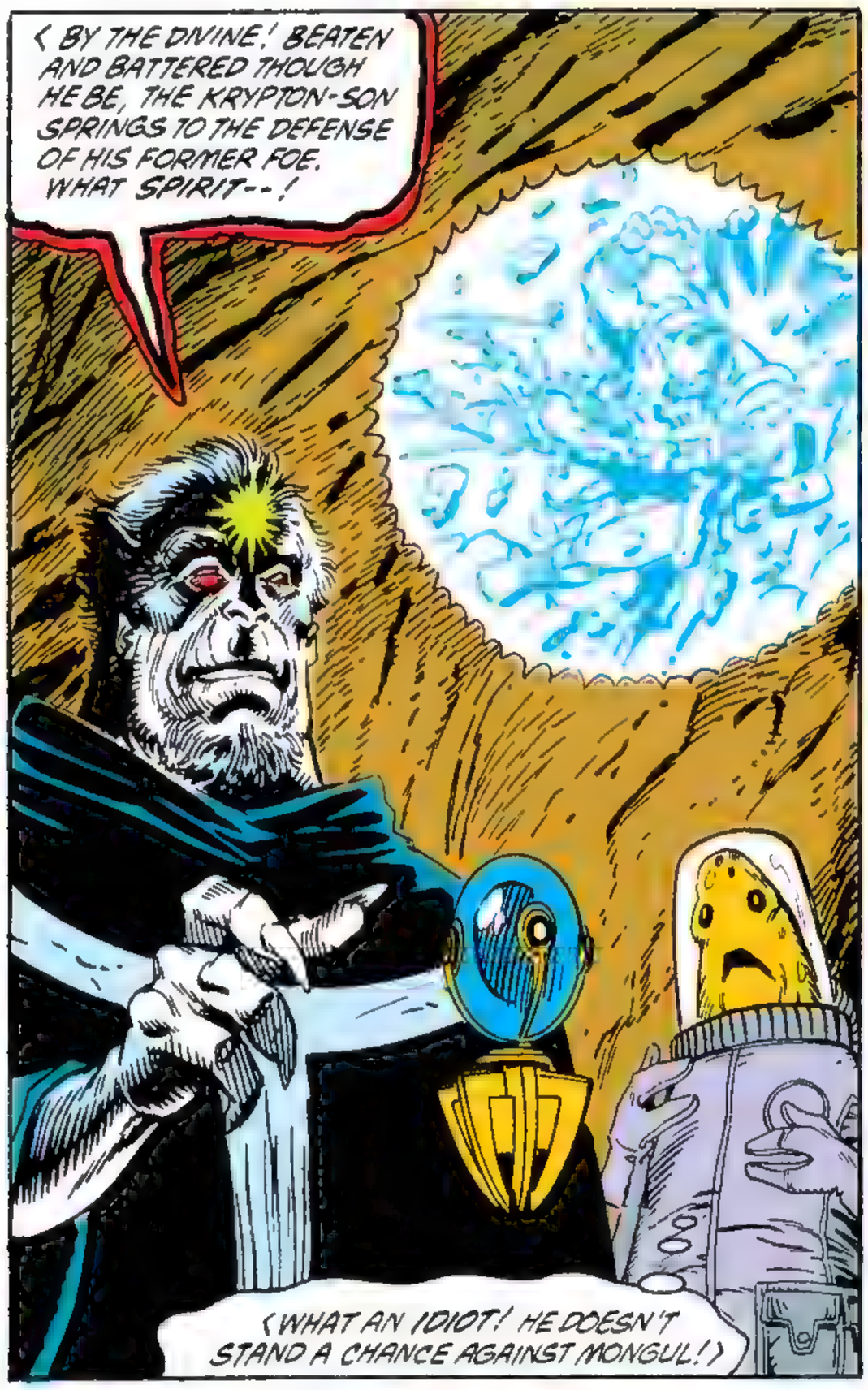
< AS FOR YOU, DRAAGA--! >

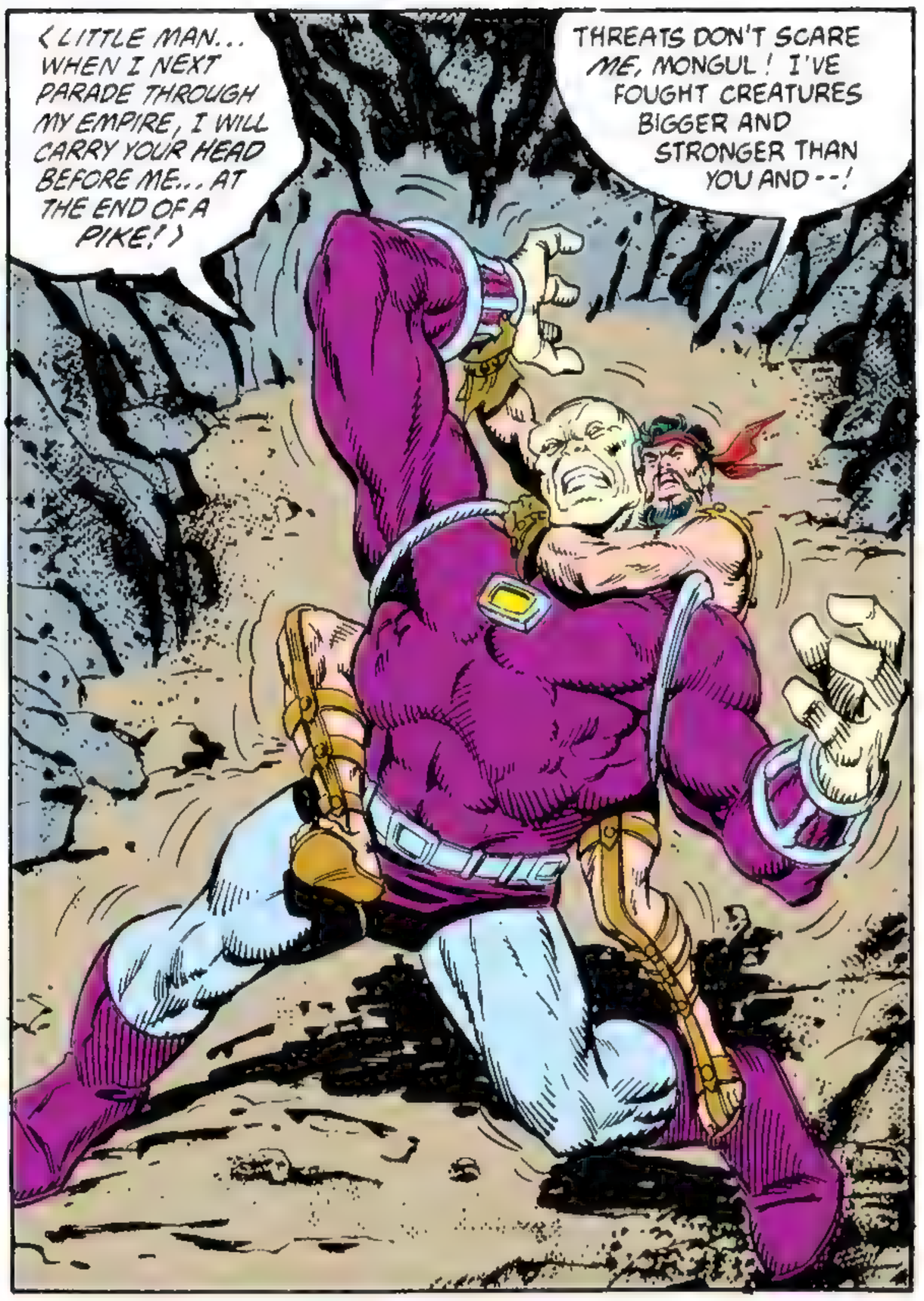
< FORGIVE ME, GREAT MONGUL... I HAVE FAILED YOU. >

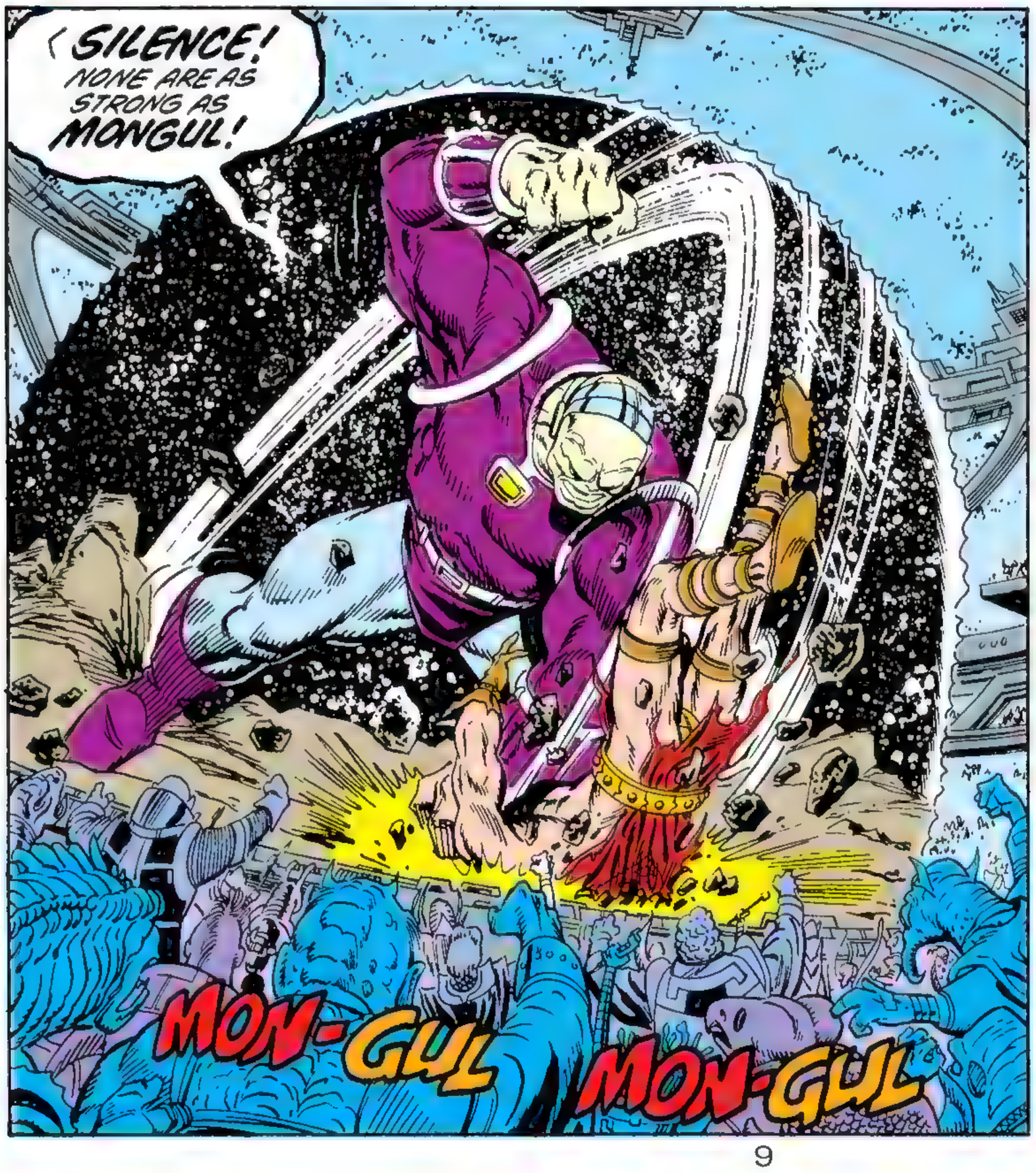
< I AM NOT FIT TO LIVE! END MY WRETCHED LIFE. >

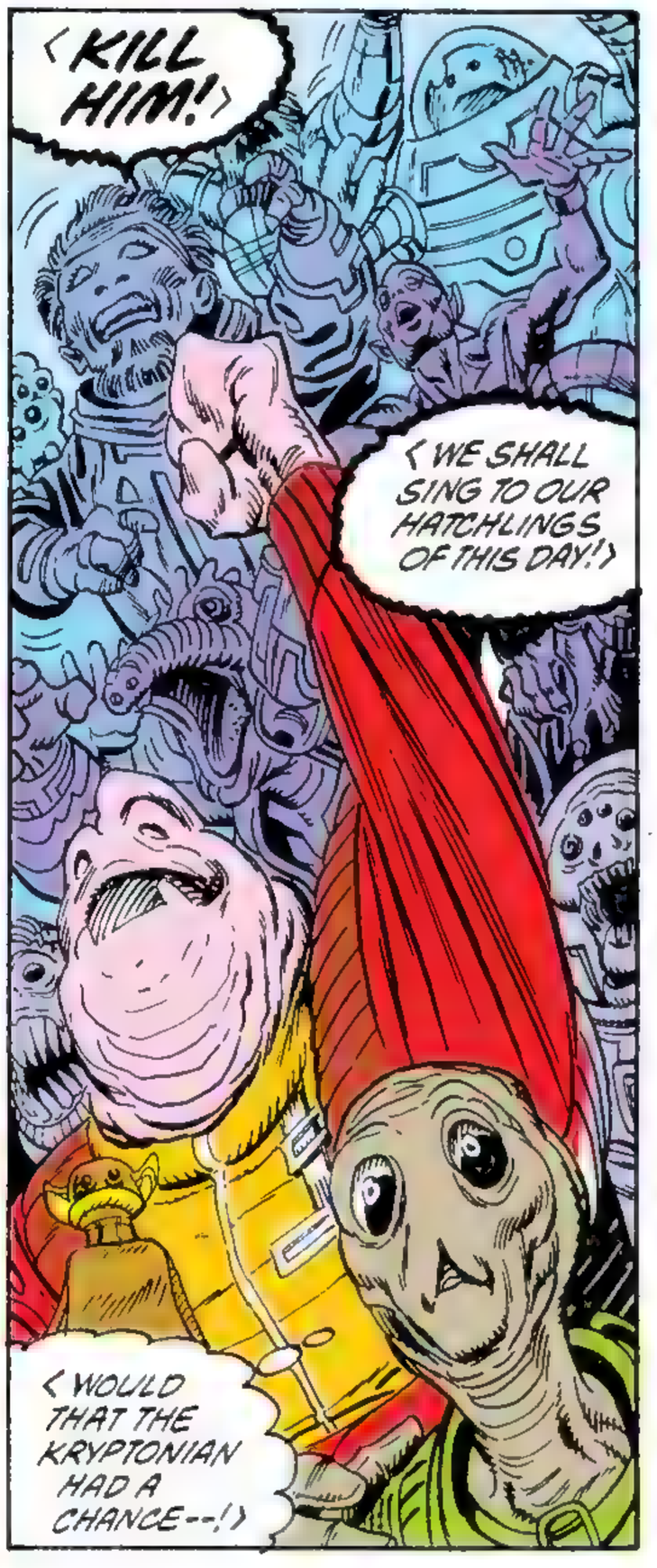
< IT SHALL BE DONE! >

NO!!


BY THE DIVINE! BEATEN AND BATTERED THOUGH HE BE, THE KRYPTON-SON SPRINGS TO THE DEFENSE OF HIS FORMER FOE. WHAT SPIRIT--!
WHAT AN IDIOT! HE DOESN'T STAND A CHANCE AGAINST MONGUL!


LITTLE MAN... WHEN I NEXT PARADE THROUGH MY EMPIRE, I WILL CARRY YOUR HEAD BEFORE ME... AT THE END OF A PIKE!
THREATS DON'T SCARE ME, MONGUL! I'VE FOUGHT CREATURES BIGGER AND STRONGER THAN YOU AND--!


SILENCE! NONE ARE AS STRONG AS MONGUL!
MON-GUL
MON-GUL


KILL HIM!
WE SHALL SING TO OUR HATCHLINGS OF THIS DAY!
WOULD THAT THE KRYPTONIAN HAD A CHANCE--!

< I AM THE CONQUEROR OF A THOUSAND WORLDS! NO SELF-PROCLAIMED SUPERMAN WILL :OOUGH!:

SHUT-UP!

:UNCH!: HE RECOVERED... INSTANTLY. I'M NOT SURE... I COULD STOP HIM... EVEN IF I WAS... AT PEAK POWER.

< THERE IS A FIRE IN YOU, LITTLE ONE! BUT IT WILL DO YOU NO GOOD! >

D-DRAAGA... WE DON'T HAVE TO DIE! YOU KNOW MONGUL IS A TYRANT... HELP ME! TOGETHER, WE CAN STOP HIM!

< MONGUL IS THE MOST RUTHLESS OF TYRANTS, BUT HE IS THE CONQUEROR OF MY PEOPLE... AND MY MASTER. I AM HONOR BOUND TO OBEY HIM. >

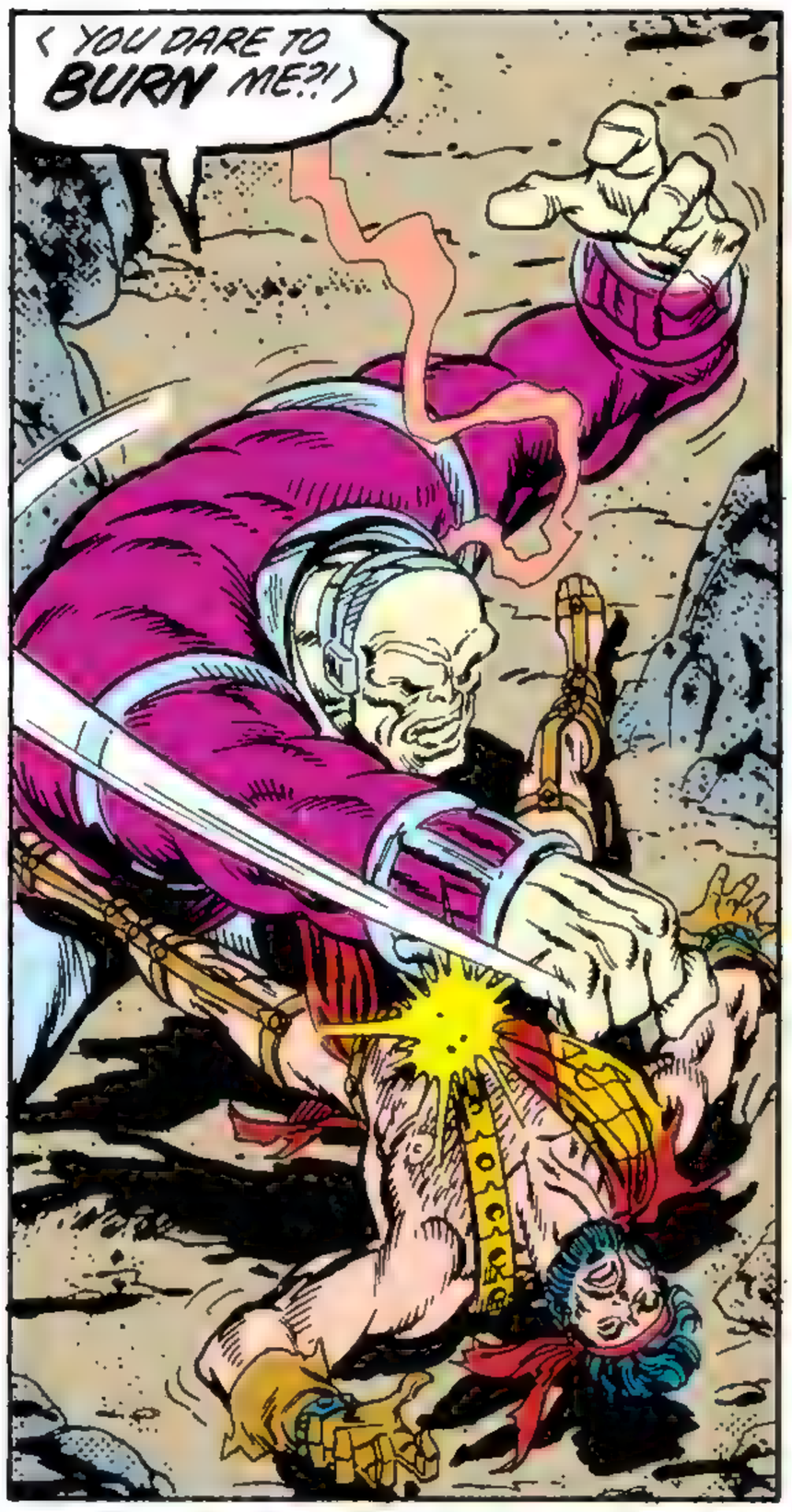
< DRAAGA KNOWS HIS PLACE, KRYPTONIAN! WERE YOU SO WISE, YOU MIGHT NOW BE MY CHAMPION. >

< INSTEAD, YOU WILL BE DEAD! >

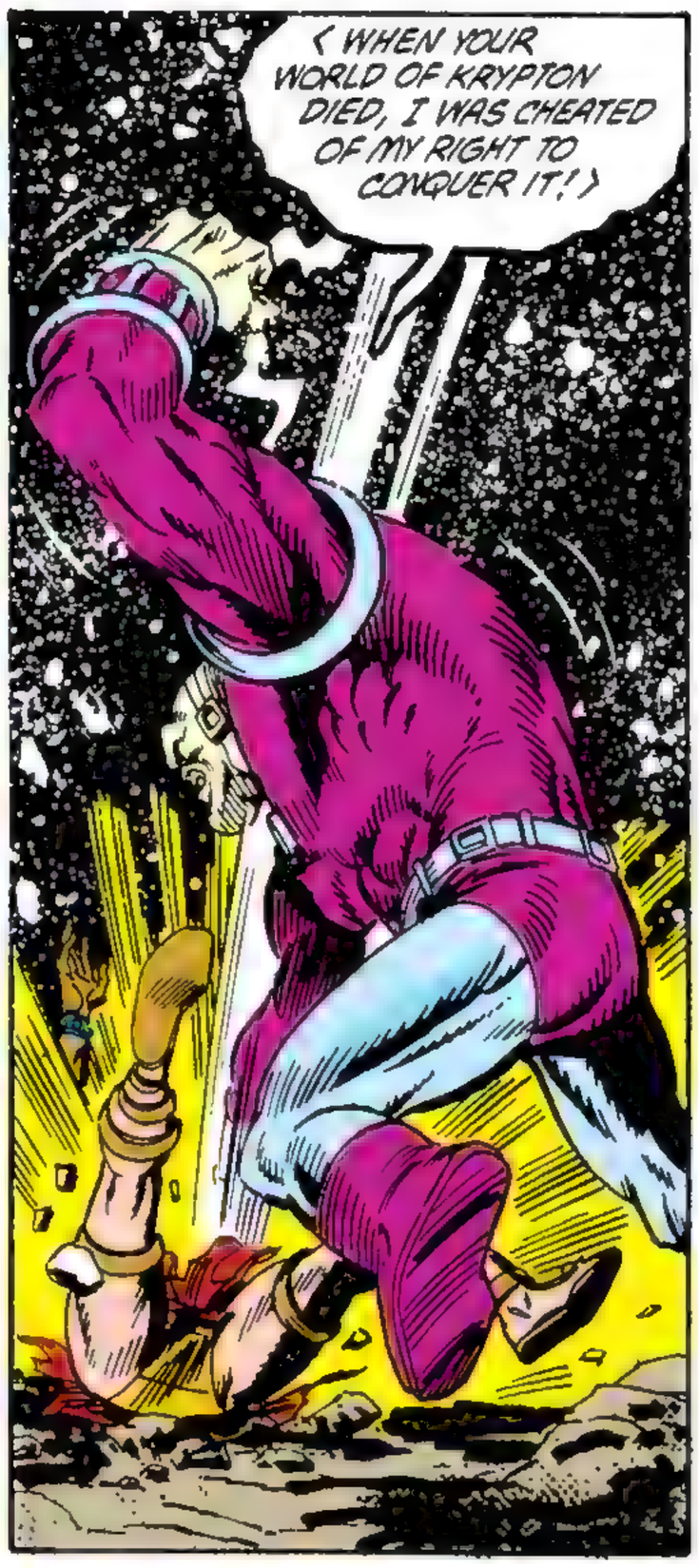
:AARGH!: MONGUL...

... YOU WERE RIGHT... ABOUT ONE THING. THERE IS A FIRE INSIDE ME!

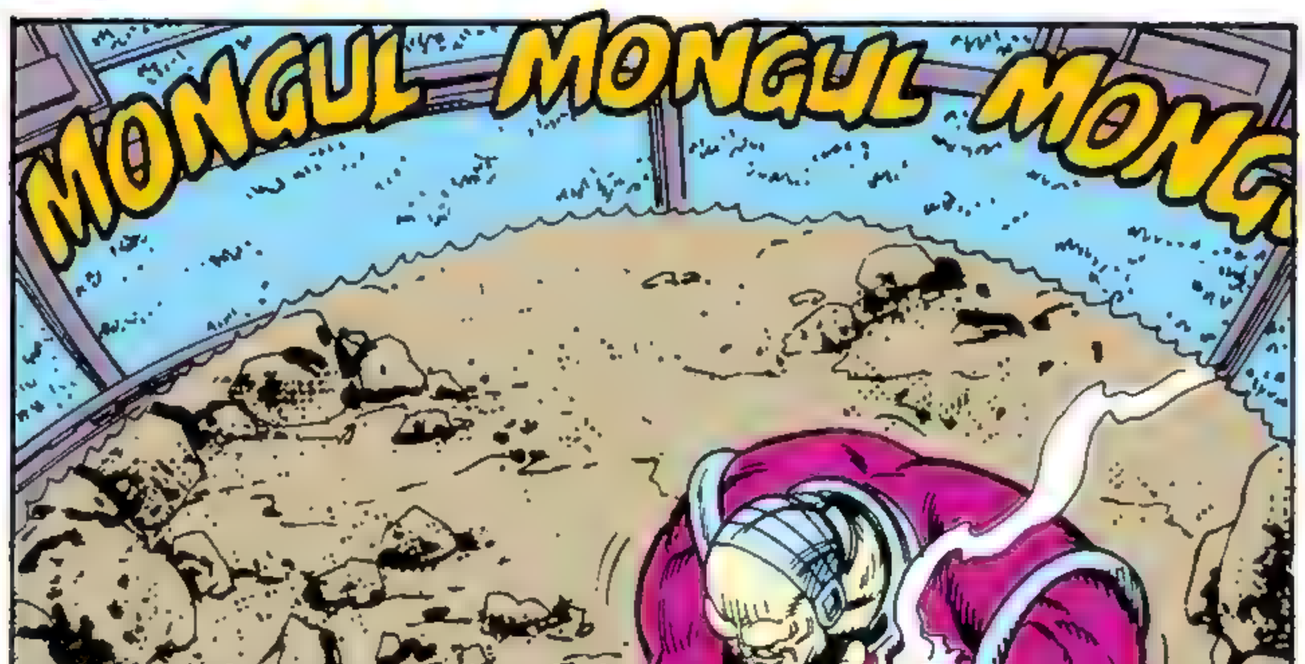
:AAAA:


〈 YOU DARE TO BURN ME?! 〉

〈 YOU DARE?!? 〉


〈 WHEN YOUR WORLD OF KRYPTON DIED, I WAS CHEATED OF MY RIGHT TO CONQUER IT! 〉

〈 BUT THIS DAY, I SHALL CLAIM THE LAST KRYPTONIAN! 〉


MONGUL MONGUL MONG

〈NO... NO! I CANNOT HAVE FOUND THE LAST SON OF KRYPTON ONLY TO LOSE HIM!〉
〈CELLKEEPER-- WE MUST RESCUE HIM FROM THE TYRANT!〉

〈CLERIC, YOU ASK THE IMPOSSIBLE! IF THE SUPERMAN ISN'T DEAD ALREADY, HE SOON WILL BE...

"〈... NO ONE CAN FACE MONGUL AND LIVE!〉"
〈HE STILL BREATHES?! WHAT MANNER OF CREATURE IS THIS KRYPTONIAN?〉
〈HERE, GREAT ONE! CARRY OUT YOUR JUDGMENT!〉

〈IF THE KRYPTON-MAN COULD SURVIVE MY BLOWS, HE MIGHT PROVE RESISTANT TO THE BLADE, AS WELL. IT WOULD NOT DO FOR THE PUBLIC TO OBSERVE SUCH A FAILURE.〉
〈AND NO DISOBEDIENT GLADIATOR MUST BE ALLOWED SO EASY A DEATH!〉

〈YOU SHALL MEET YOUR END, DRAAGA. BUT AT A TIME OF MY CHOOSING!
〈GUARDS! TAKE THESE TWO TO THE INTERNMENT CHAMBERS! AND EXERCISE EXTREME CARE WITH THE BEARDED ONE...〉

〈... I HAVE SPECIAL PLANS FOR HIM!〉
BUT EVEN AS THE GUARDS RUSH TO CARRY OUT THEIR ORDERS...

...THOUSANDS OF LIGHT YEARS AWAY, ON PLANET EARTH, A REMARKABLY SIMILIAR BODY ROUSES FROM A FITFUL SLEEP.

LAST NIGHT, HE ROAMED THE STREETS OF METROPOLIS, LOOKING IN VAIN FOR A FAMILIAR SIGHT.

FINALLY, IN IMITATION OF ANOTHER HOMELESS MAN, HE CURLED UP ON A DOORSTEP AND SOUGHT SOLACE IN SLEEP.

HE FEELS HE SHOULD BELONG HERE, BUT THE STREETS OF THIS CITY ARE STRANGE TO HIM...

...AND HER PEOPLE SEEM RUDE AND UNCARING.

YA WATCH THE GAME LAST NIGHT?

YEAH, THE *MONARCHS* BLEW AN EASY ONE!

DAILY STAR PLANET REPORTER ALIVE

HEY! WATCH IT, MAC!

THEY'D HAVE WON IF CARSON HAD SEEN THAT BALL COMIN' IN THE 7TH!

I SWEAR, SOME PEOPLE JUST DON'T OPEN THEIR *EYES!*

DAILY STAR PLANET REPORTER ALIVE?

THE CITY IS SO BIG, SO CONFUSING. HE IS NO LONGER CERTAIN WHY HE EVEN CAME HERE. IF ONLY HE COULD REMEMBER...

HE KNOWS THAT HE IS CLARK KENT... AND THAT SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAD HAPPENED... SOMETHING TO DO WITH SUPERMAN.

SUPERMAN WAS VERY TROUBLED. HE SAID HE HAD TO LEAVE EARTH...

...HE SAID GOODBYE TO MA AND PA AND TO LANA. WHAT ELSE WAS IT THAT HE SAID? SOMETHING ABOUT HOW MATRIX SHOULD STAY WITH THEM...

MATRIX...

...YES, MATRIX HAD BEEN LIVING WITH MA AND PA. SHE WAS STAYING IN CLARK'S OLD ROOM. BUT THEN THE TELEPHONE CALLS CAME... PEOPLE WERE LOOKING FOR CLARK. MATRIX WANTED TO HELP...

...BUT SHE COULDN'T... THEY NEEDED CLARK. SO... SOMETHING HAPPENED TO MATRIX... AND CLARK CAME BACK.

THE CALLS CAME FROM METROPOLIS... THAT MUST BE WHY I CAME HERE.

Mike!

BAKERY

WISH I COULD KNOW FOR SURE. SO HARD TO THINK WHEN... I'M *HUNGRY.*

FOOD.

aaaah!

IT SMELLS GOOD.

BAKERY

MR. KENT?!?

Mike!

BAKE

HOLY SMOKES, IT *IS* YOU! YOU'RE *ALIVE!*

I... LIVE. *YES.*

PARK

I CAN HARDLY *BELIEVE* IT! THE POLICE THOUGHT YOU'D BEEN *KILLED!* BUT THEN, WE STARTED GETTING REPORTS--!

WHERE'VE YOU *BEEN?* WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?

BEEN? I DON'T KNOW... I'M NOT SURE. W-WHO ARE *YOU?*

MR. KENT, DON'T YOU *KNOW* ME? IT'S JIMMY... *JIMMY OLSEN!*

JIM-MY?

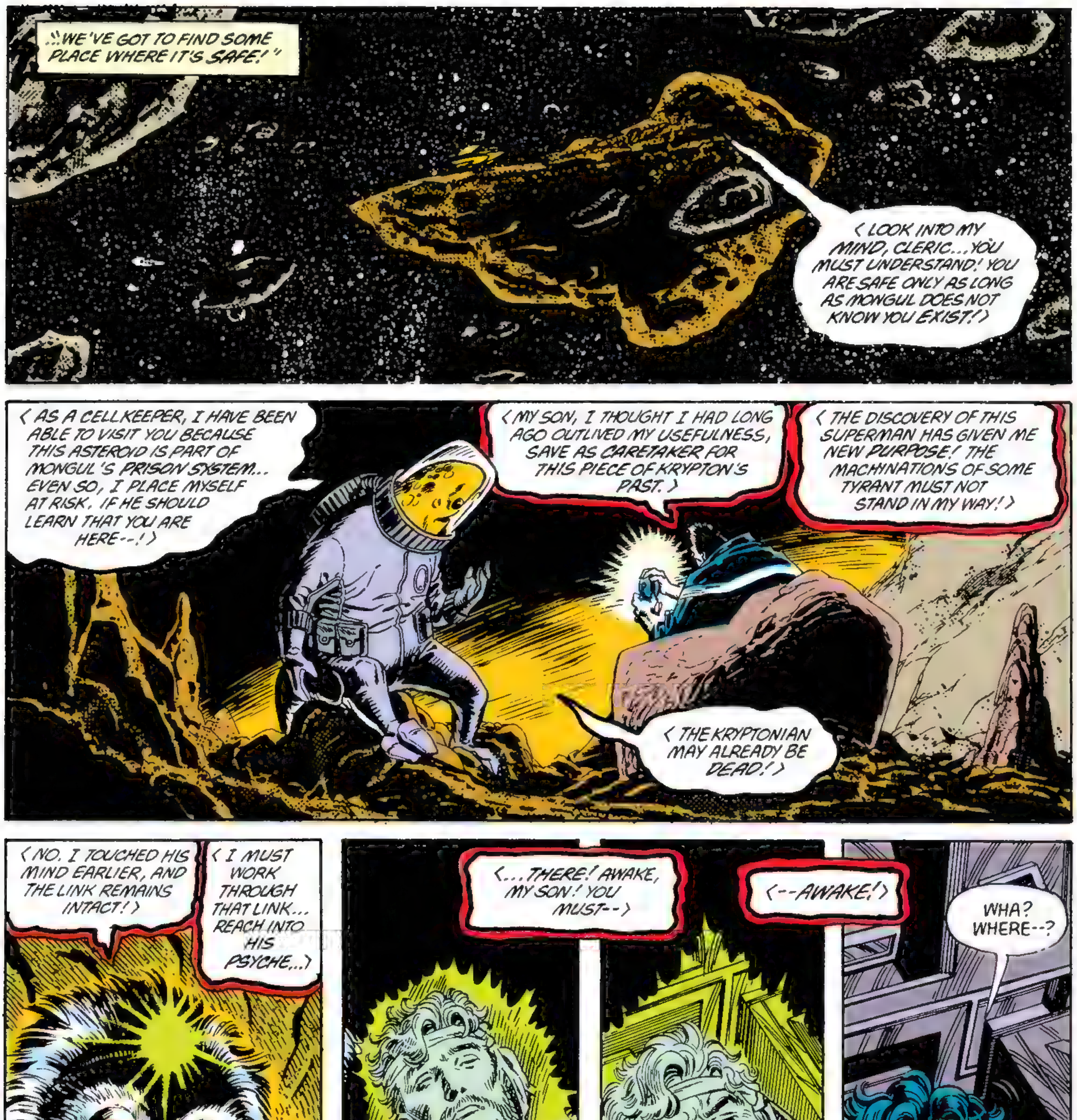
I... I RECALL... A PICTURE... BUT YOU WERE SMALLER, YOUNGER.

HE'S TALKING LIKE HE HAS *AMNESIA!* HE MADE A LOT OF ENEMIES WITH HIS EXPOSÉ ON THE INTERGANG CRIME LORDS... WHAT IF HE'S BEEN *DRUGGED* OR SOMETHING?

MR. KENT, I DON'T THINK WE SHOULD BE STANDING AROUND HERE IN THE OPEN.

TAXI!

COME ON WITH ME, MR. KENT...


!!WE'VE GOT TO FIND SOME PLACE WHERE IT'S SAFE!"
<LOOK INTO MY MIND, CLERIC...YOU MUST UNDERSTAND! YOU ARE SAFE ONLY AS LONG AS MONGUL DOES NOT KNOW YOU EXIST!>
<AS A CELLKEEPER, I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO VISIT YOU BECAUSE THIS ASTEROID IS PART OF MONGUL'S PRISON SYSTEM... EVEN SO, I PLACE MYSELF AT RISK. IF HE SHOULD LEARN THAT YOU ARE HERE--!>
<MY SON, I THOUGHT I HAD LONG AGO OUTLIVED MY USEFULNESS, SAVE AS CARETAKER FOR THIS PIECE OF KRYPTON'S PAST.>
<THE DISCOVERY OF THIS SUPERMAN HAS GIVEN ME NEW PURPOSE! THE MACHINATIONS OF SOME TYRANT MUST NOT STAND IN MY WAY!>
<THE KRYPTONIAN MAY ALREADY BE DEAD!>
<NO. I TOUCHED HIS MIND EARLIER, AND THE LINK REMAINS INTACT!>
<I MUST WORK THROUGH THAT LINK... REACH INTO HIS PSYCHE...>
<...THERE! AWAKE, MY SON! YOU MUST-->
<--AWAKE!>
WHA? WHERE--?

〈YOU ARE AT YOUR LIFE'S END, "SUPERMAN".〉
〈AND YOU ARE ALLOTTED A SINGULAR HONOR... NO PRISONER HAS EARNED SUCH MASSIVE RESTRAINTS IN NEARLY A CENTURY!〉
〈BUT YOU WILL NOT BE LONG HELD IMMOBILE. AS I PROMISED, BOTH YOU AND DRAAGA WILL DIE BY MY HAND...〉
〈...BUT DRAAGA SHALL PRECEDE YOU.〉
〈...EVENTUALLY!〉
YOU... YOU--!
〈PERHAPS YOU TWO SHALL MEET AGAIN IN THE AFTERLIFE...〉
〈MISSED! HOW UNFORTUNATE!〉
〈AT THIS RATE, IT MIGHT TAKE DAYS FOR ME TO KILL HIM! HAHAHA!〉

NO ONE'S DYING LIKE THAT!

(EH? THE HEAT FROM YOUR EYES IS SO INTENSE?! THEN YOU COULD HAVE CRIPPLED ME! WHY DIDN'T YOU--?)

BECAUSE... I'M... NOT... LIKE... YOU!

YEARS OF EXPOSURE TO OUR SUN'S ENERGIES HAVE GIVEN SUPERMAN POWERS FAR BEYOND THOSE OF MORTAL BEINGS. AND THOUGH HIS WEEKS OF SPACE TRAVEL HAVE LEFT HIM DRAINED--

--THIS MAN OF STEEL CAN STILL STRIKE BACK... FASTER THAN A SPEEDING BULLET!

(YOU ARE STRONG... FOR YOUR SIZE. BUT I AM STRONGER!)

(AND I, TOO, POSSESS AN INNER FIRE!)

(DANCE, LITTLE ONE! DANCE!)

"〈HA! HA! YOUR DANCE HAS DOOMED DRAAGA!〉"

OMIGOD.

〈AGAIN HE SPARES MY LIFE! WHY?〉

UUNGH!

〈MY THANKS, SUPERMAN! NOW I CAN OBLITERATE YOU BOTH AT ONCE!〉

DON'T...

...COUNT ON IT!

I'M NO GLADIATOR, MONGUL! I USE MY POWER TO FIGHT FOR JUSTICE--

--TO HELP THE *POWERLESS!*

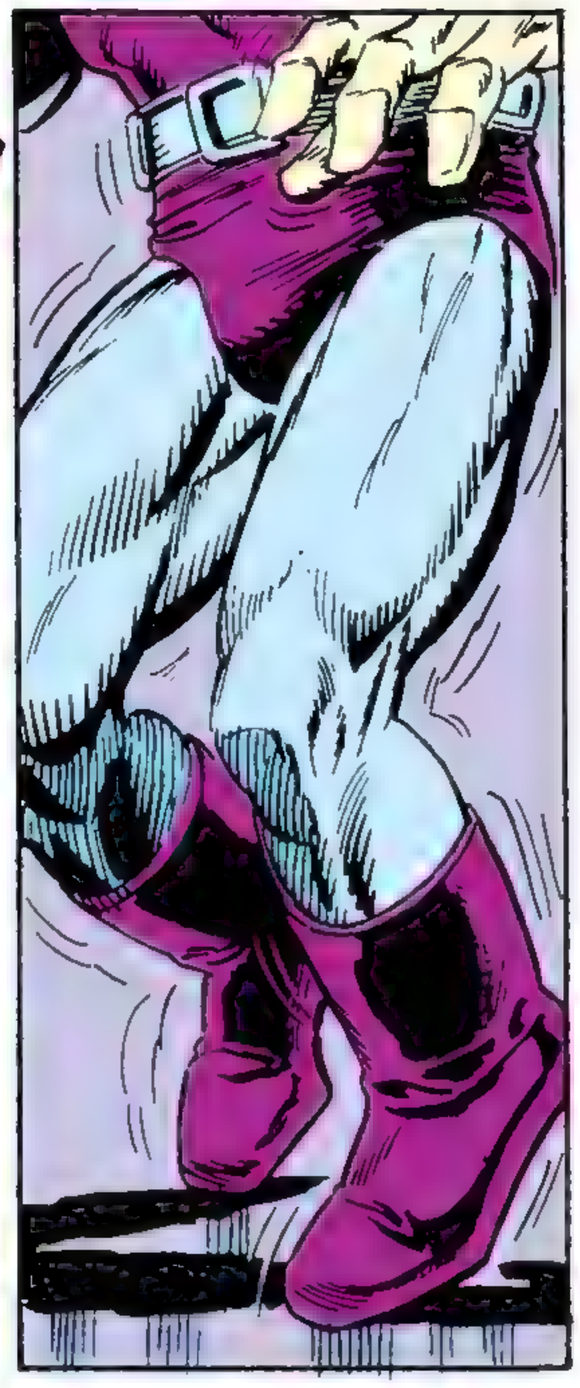
AND TO STOP *MONSTERS* LIKE YOU!

〈MOST IMPRESSIVE! WOULD THAT YOU HAD SHOWN SUCH SPIRIT IN THE GAMES!〉

〈I HAVE HAD ENOUGH OF YOU!〉

NO... NOT YET.

KA-RAK



WHOOOM

〈I DON'T BELIEVE IT! THIS IS TERRIBLE!〉
〈TERRIBLE? HE OVERCAME THE TYRANT!〉
〈YES, BUT MONGUL STILL LIVES! AND IF SUPERMAN IS TO BE BELIEVED, HE WON'T KILL HIM!〉

〈AFTER SUCH A HUMILIATION, MONGUL WILL NOT REST UNTIL HE HAS HIS REVENGE! YOUR "LAST KRYPTONIAN" IS AS GOOD AS DEAD!〉
〈NO! THAT MUST NOT HAPPEN!〉

DRAAGA? YOU... OKAY?

JUST GIVE ME A MINUTE...

<SUPERMAN MUST LIVE!>

...TO CATCH MY BREATH... AND I'LL GET YOU... OUT OF THOSE CHAINS.

<HE MUST NOT DIE!>

<I DO NOT UNDERSTAND YOU, SUPERMAN! YOU DEFEATED ME IN THE GAMES--YOU SHOULD HAVE CLAIMED MY LIFE. WHY DO YOU CONTINUE TO PRESERVE IT?

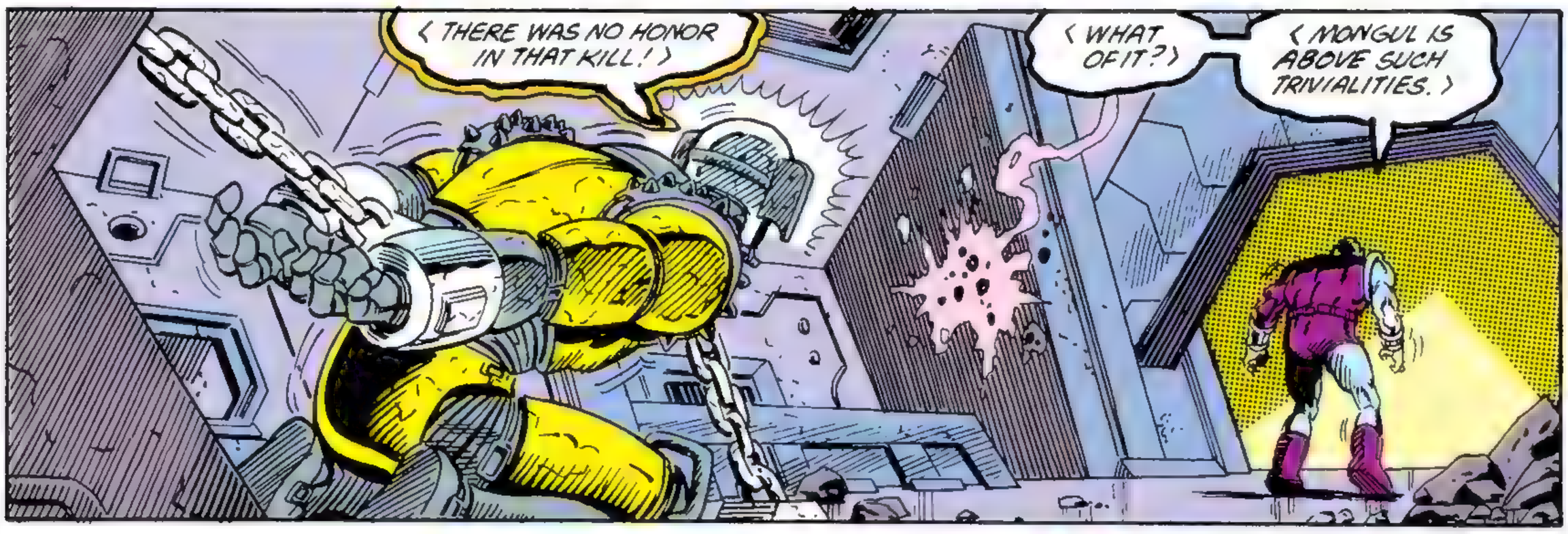
JUST THE WAY... I WAS BROUGHT UP... I GUESS.

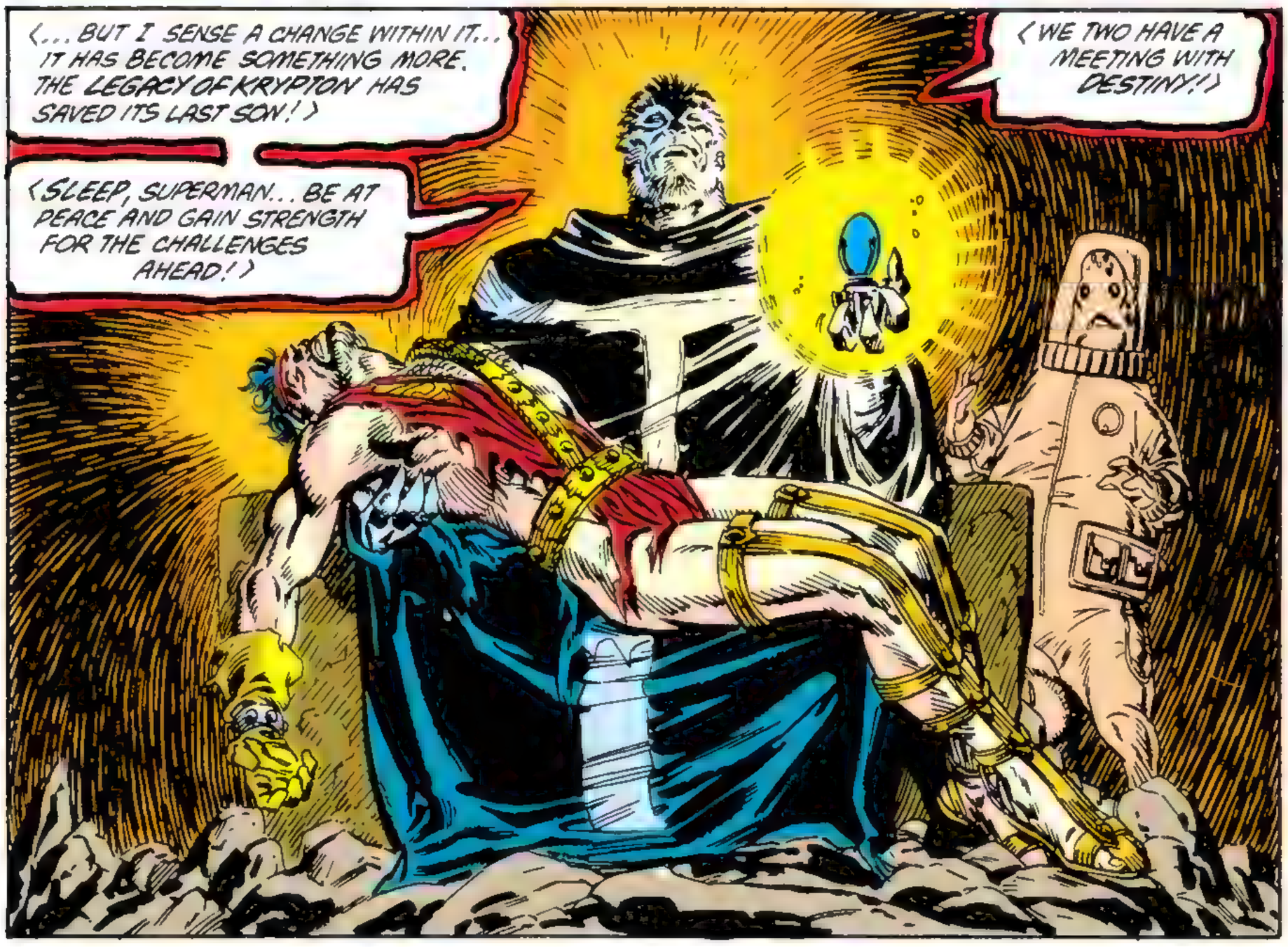
<IT IS NOT RIGHT! THERE MUST BE--!>

<MONGUL... NO!>

<YOU SHOULD HAVE KILLED ME WHEN YOU HAD THE CHANCE, FOOL!>

"<HE MUST BE SAVED!!>"




〈...BUT I SENSE A CHANGE WITHIN IT... IT HAS BECOME SOMETHING MORE. THE LEGACY OF KRYPTON HAS SAVED ITS LAST SON!〉
〈WE TWO HAVE A MEETING WITH DESTINY!〉
〈SLEEP, SUPERMAN... BE AT PEACE AND GAIN STRENGTH FOR THE CHALLENGES AHEAD!〉

NEXT WEEK in

ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN #455

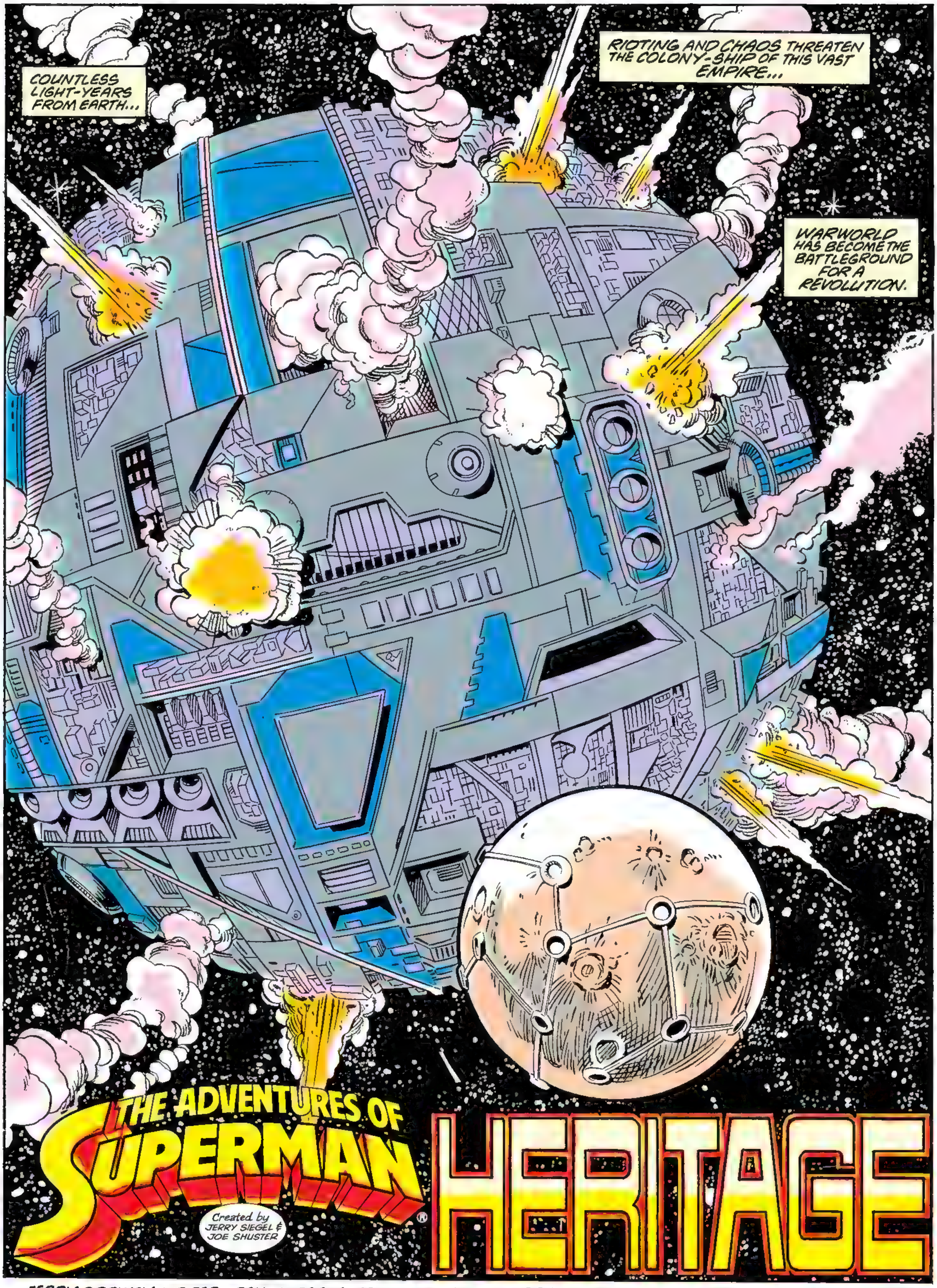
THE MAN OF STEEL LEARNS OF HIS "HERITAGE!"

NEXT MONTH in

SUPERMAN #33

THE LAST SON OF KRYPTON FULFILLS "TWO DESTINIES!"

(BELIEVE US, YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS THESE ISSUES!)


COUNTLESS LIGHT-YEARS FROM EARTH...
RIOTING AND CHAOS THREATEN THE COLONY-SHIP OF THIS VAST EMPIRE...
WARWORLD HAS BECOME THE BATTLEGROUND FOR A REVOLUTION.
THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN
Created by JERRY SIEGEL & JOE SHUSTER
HERITAGE

JERRY ORDWAY - WRITER • DAN JURGENS - PENCILLER • ART THIBERT - EMBELLISHER • ALBERT DE GUZMAN - LETTERER
GLENN WHITMORE - COLORIST • JONATHAN PETERSON - MOST EXCELLENT ASSOCIATE • MIKE CARLIN - TRULY BOGUS EDITOR

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WARWORLD IS HOME TO THE EMPEROR MONGUL AND PRIVILEGED REPRESENTATIVES FROM EACH OF THE CONQUERED WORLDS COMPRISING THIS EMPIRE.

THE REST OF THE POPULATION IS MADE UP OF SLAVES, BROUGHT HERE TO MAKE THE MACHINE WORK.

HOURS AGO, THESE PEOPLE WOULDN'T HAVE CONSIDERED DISOBEYING HIS WORD -- THE EDICT OF MONGUL!

MONGUL BROKE PRECEDENT AND TELEPORTED DOWN FROM HIS THRONE TO THE ARENA -- CONFRONTING THE STRANGER DIRECTLY!

PERSONALLY COMPETING IN HIS OWN GAMES, MONGUL HIMSELF FAILED TO KILL AS WELL.!*

THE OUTCRY FROM GAME-FUNDAMENTALISTS -- FANNED BY SOME STRATEGICALLY PLACED INSTIGATION, IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TURMOIL IN THE STREETS.

*IN SUPERMAN #32

< WE NEED MORE BACK-UP. >

< NOT A CHANCE! ALL OF WARWORLD IS LIKE *THIS*.! >

< I HEAR THIS IS *NOTHING* COMPARED TO THE COLISEUM QUADRANT. >

< ALL BECAUSE MONGUL *MEDDLED* IN THE GAMES! >

< WHAT'S THIS PLACE COME TO -- UGHH!? >

ALL IT TOOK TO RELEASE THEIR PENT-UP AGGRESSIONS WAS A STRANGER WHO DARED TO STAND AGAINST TRADITION...

...A GLADIATOR WHO BESTED ALL IN COMPETITION, INCLUDING MONGUL'S GREATEST CHAMPION DRAAGA!

A STRANGER WHO REFUSED TO KILL!*

*SEE ACTION ANNUAL #2.

<UNDER COMMAND OF MONGUL, CEASE THIS ACTIVITY!>

<MONGUL'S WORD MEANS NOTHING!>

<I'LL NOT BE HUMILIATED LIKE THIS!>

<THIS IS NOT WASTE-WATER, OPPRESSOR...>

<...BUT FUEL!>

RAHHHHHH!

THE INSURRECTION ON THE SURFACE THREATENS THOSE WHO DWELL IN ITS DEEPEST REGIONS--WARWORLD'S OVERSEERS...

<WHAT IS OUR QUADRANT REPORT?>

<HAIL, CHIEF ENGINEER--RIOTING "UPTOP" HAS DEMOLISHED MANY OF OUR SOLAR SHIELDS.>

<THE BULK-SHIELDING REACTOR HAS SHUT DOWN.>

<IF THE MULTITUDE *PERSIST* IN THIS "REVOLT," WARWORLD COULD BE DAMAGED IRREPARABLY.>

<WE CAN DO *NOTHING* DOWN HERE SAVE *DAMAGE* CONTROL.

<E-D AND I HAVE NEED OF A *RESPITE*.>

<SORRY TO TELL, A-L, BUT I AM *DUE* TO CONFAB WITH THE *HIGH COUNCIL* TO DISCUSS THIS *SITUATION*.>

<SOMETHING *WILL* BE DONE TO HELP.>

<AS EVER, I *LIVE* TO *SERVE*, CHIEF ENGINEER.>

<SALUTATIONS, FELLOW COUNCILMEMBERS.>

<I BEAR *MOST* GRIEVOUS NEWS OF QUADS 6 AND 78.>

<WE WILL BE APPRISED OF THE SITUATION AT *ALL* QUADRANTS...>

<...THEN A VOTE SHALL BE *TAKEN*.>

<THIS WORLD OUR FOREBEARS *BUILT* AND WHICH *WE MAINTAIN*...>

<...IS IN *DIRE STRAITS* DUE TO CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING MONGUL.>

<HE HAS CONTROLLED TOPSIDE FOR MANY CYCLES. UNCHALLENGED UNTIL *NOW*.>

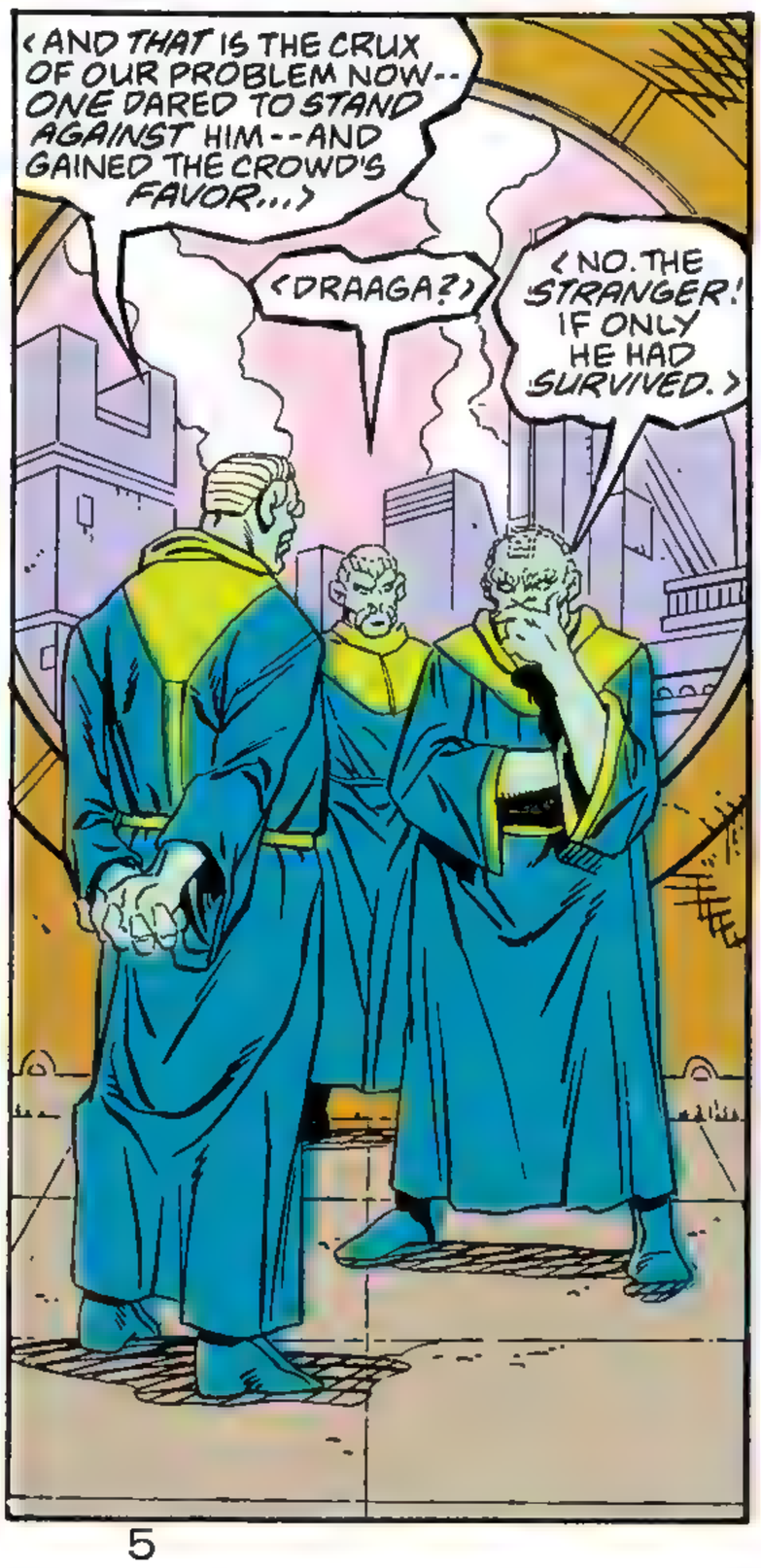
<MY COMRADES, IT APPEARS THAT WARWORLD IS *RIPE* FOR A *CHANGE*!>

"< OUR ALLIANCE WITH THE BRUTAL MONGUL HAS BEEN UNEASY FROM THE DAY HE FIRST ARRIVED HERE.>
"< HIS DREAM OF BUILDING AN EMPIRE FIT WELL WITH OUR OWN DESIRE TO COMMANDEER WORLDS IN WHICH TO DEVELOP TECHNOLOGY.

"< HIS SAVAGE NATURE SCARED US AS MUCH AS IT ATTRACTED US. A DEAL WAS MADE.>
"< WE SUPPLIED THE TECHNOLOGY...>
"<...HE SUPPLIED THE BRAWN.>

"< MONGUL'S NAME WAS LEGEND AS HE CARVED HIS EMPIRE IN THE NAME OF WARWORLD!.>

"< HE PROVED HIMSELF A RUTHLESS MONARCH-- ALL FEARED HIM, SOME CANONIZED HIM, CREATING AN ALMOST FANATICAL TONE IN REGARD TO HIS GLADITORIAL 'GAMES.'>
"< MONGUL'S BLOOD WOULD NOT ALLOW HIM TO MERELY WATCH THE CONTEST...>
"< HE INSISTED ON JOINING COMPETITION PERSONALLY!>"


< AND THAT IS THE CRUX OF OUR PROBLEM NOW-- ONE DARED TO STAND AGAINST HIM--AND GAINED THE CROWD'S FAVOR...>
< DRAAGA?>
< NO. THE STRANGER! IF ONLY HE HAD SURVIVED.>

< YES. HE WOULD MAKE A COLORFUL REPLACEMENT, INDEED, FOR MONGUL...

"<...SUMMON DRAAGA TO THE COUNCIL...>

"<...HE WILL BE GIVEN A DUTY TO PERFORM FOR US BEFORE WE APPOINT HIM ACTING RULER OF WARWORLD!>"

<CLERIC--WHAT IF THIS IS A *TRAP* LAID BY MONGUL HIMSELF TO EXPOSE *YOU*?>

<HIS ONLY CONCERN WAS THE DEATH OF THE *KRYPTONIAN*.>

<*NONSENSE*, CELLKEEP! HE KNOWS NOT OF MY EXISTENCE-- I'VE BEEN IN THIS PENITENTIARY LONGER THAN MONGUL HAS RULED!>

<THROUGH *MIND-LINK* WITH THE KRYPTONIAN *WE* WITNESS MONGUL SEND FORTH A *DEATH BEAM* FROM HIS AMULET TO KRYPTON'S LAST SON.>

<IT WAS THE DIVINE POWER OF THE LAST REMNANT OF KRYPTON THAT WHISKED HIM FROM THE MAW OF DEATH...>

<...AND INTO MY ARMS!>

<I HAD THOUGHT THIS *ERADICATOR* TO BE BUT AN INSTRUMENT OF DESTRUCTION...>

<...BUT NOW I SEE IT TO BE SOMETHING MORE--A PROTECTOR OF KRYPTON'S SOLE HEIR!>

<IT SEEMS YOUR *TALKING* HAS PRIED HIM FROM HIS SLEEP.>

¡UHHNN!--*NO!* *MONGUL...* HUH?

WHERE AM I?

YOU SAVED ME--BROUGHT ME HERE?

‹YOU ARE IN DETENTION BLOCK ZEE OF WARWORLD'S PENAL SYSTEM--I AM KNOWN AS THE CLERIC, AND *THIS* IS 385.›

‹WE MERELY *WISHED* FOR YOUR SAFETY--*THIS* IS WHAT MADE THAT WISH REALITY!›

‹IT IS YOUR *HERITAGE*--A RELIC OF THE PLANET YOU CAME FROM.›

THAT RESEMBLES THE SHIP I CAME TO EARTH--! *IT'S* THE *ERADICATOR!*

AND *YOU*--YOU "TOLD" ME OF ITS HISTORY...

...WHEN YOU WERE IN MY HEAD DURING MONGUL'S *GAMES.** YOU'RE THE PRIEST FROM KRYPTON.

**ACTION ANNUAL #2 AGAIN!*

JUST *WHAT* IS GOING ON HERE?

YOU WERE PRESENT WHEN I WAS TAKEN TO THE *EXAMINATION BAY*, BEFORE THE *GAMES*.

‹I ALERTED THE CLERIC TO YOUR PRESENCE, AND APPOINTED LENTRA TO BE YOUR DRESSER.›

YOU'VE BEEN HELPING ME ALL ALONG? LENTRA WAS VERY KIND TO ME.

‹*THAT* IS HER WAY. SHE IS A VALUED FRIEND, AND I FEAR FOR HER SAFETY.›

‹THE *WOMAN* IS IN NO DANGER--BUT YOU'D BEST RETURN TO YOUR DUTIES ON THE PRISON PLANET BEFORE YOU ARE MISSED!›

‹WE HAVE MUCH TO LEARN, KAL-EL.›

‹I AM PLEASED YOU HAVE FOUND YOUR DESTINIES.›

"PLANET EARTH TO CLARK KENT! KENT?"

"WHY IS IT THAT YOU FIND THE BUBBLES IN MY WATER COOLER MORE INTERESTING THAN ANSWERING MY QUESTIONS?"

"INSPECTOR HENDERSON, CLARK'S BEEN ACTING THIS WAY SINCE I FOUND HIM THIS MORNING.

"SOMETHING HAPPENED TO HIM WHILE HE WAS MISSING, I BET!"

ARRRGH! THAT'S WHAT I'M TRYING TO FIND OUT, OLSEN!

TO SMALLVILLE? YOU WERE *THERE* WITH YOUR PARENTS WHEN THAT PRIVATE EYE WAS KILLED IN YOUR APARTMENT?

EVERYONE THOUGHT IT WAS *YOU*-- EXCEPT *ME*! I JUST *KNEW* YOU COULDN'T BE DEAD!

ARE *YOU* TOBY? TOBY KEPT CALLING JONATHAN AND MARTHA KENT. I LIVE IN *THEIR* HOUSE.

"TOBY MUST SEE CLARK KENT *OR POLICE* WILL COME TAKE US ALL AWAY."

WE JUST WANT TO HELP YOU, MR. KENT!

WHEN SUPERMAN LEFT EARTH, *YOU* DISAPPEARED AS WELL.

YES. GONE. BUT HE WOULD NOT TAKE ME HOME.

TOBY? TOBY RAYNES OF THE DAILY STAR? DID YOU COME TO METROPOLIS TO SEE HER?

SHE BROKE THE STORY THAT MR. KENT WAS STILL ALIVE.

I DON'T LIKE TOBY.

I LIKE LANA. SHE SHOWED ME HOW TO MAKE BUBBLES LIKE THESE WITH GUM.

ARE YOU SURE THAT DOCTOR FOUND NO BUMPS ON HIS HEAD?

THERE WERE NO BRUISES OR ANY OTHER SIGN OF PHYSICAL VIOLENCE ON HIM, INSPECTOR. MAYBE A PSYCHIATRI--

VIOLENCE. JUST LIKE ON TELEVISION...

WANTED DEAD OR ALIVE D.A. ORDSTR

112658

5-1-89

TWO BAD MEN CALLED ME "FOUR-EYES." THEY WERE NOT FUNNY.

DID THEY TRY TO KILL YOU? WERE YOU HIT ON THE HEAD? IS *THAT* WHAT HAPPENED?

NO. SUPERMAN'S *PAL* LET THEM HIT *HIM* ON THE HEAD, THEN WE HIT THE BAD GUYS UNTIL THEY WENT TO SLEEP.*

SUPERMAN'S *PAL*?

I THOUGHT I WAS SUPERMAN'S PAL!

*LAST ISSUE

I *READ* "SUPERMAN'S PAL" ON THE SHIRT HE WORE. LANA SAYS I READ VERY WELL.

MAYBE I'D BETTER *STAY* WITH YOU AT YOUR APARTMENT 'TIL THIS INTERGANG STUFF QUIETS DOWN!

INTERGANG "STUFF" IS *LOUD*?

I DON'T ENVY YOU, OLSEN!

GET A SECURITY SYSTEM INSTALLED, AND I'LL ASSIGN A COUPLE OF MEN TO WATCH THE PLACE.

BZZZT

BILL HENDERSON HERE! OH, *HELLO* MISS LANE.

IF YOU'RE STILL LOOKING FOR A *QUOTE* ON THE PETERSON CASE, IT'S "*NO COMMENT!*"

NO, NO, INSPECTOR. I GOT HIS BROTHER TO OPEN UP! STORY'S BEEN PUT TO BED!

JIMMY CALLED WHILE I WAS OUT RUNNING. HE SAID *CLARK* IS WITH YOU THERE? PLEASE LET ME SPEAK WITH HIM!

KENT. LOIS LANE WANTS TO TALK TO YOU--ON THE PHONE!

I DON'T THINK I *LIKE* HER. DO I, JIMMY OLSEN?

WHAT? DID CLARK JUST SAY WHAT I THOUGHT HE...?

CLARK?

CLARK, *PLEASE* TALK TO ME.

I KNOW I'VE BEEN ROUGH ON YOU IN THE PAST BUT I THOUGHT WE WERE FRIENDS!

LANA IS MY FRIEND.

CLARK, I *AM* YOUR FRIEND AS WELL!

NOK

NOK

LOOK, CAN YOU HOLD ON FOR A SECOND? SOMEBODY'S AT THE DOOR!

CATHERINE GRANT? WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE?

I'M SO GLAD I CAUGHT YOU AT HOME!

I'VE GOT MAJOR WORRIES, AND I DIDN'T KNOW WHERE TO TURN!

WHY *ME*? IS YOUR HAIRDRESSER OUT OF TOWN?

AHH-- HAVE A SEAT AND LET ME FINISH MY CALL.

I *DON'T* BELIEVE IT! CLARK KENT HUNG UP ON *ME*!

CLARK'S ALIVE? THEN THE REPORTS WERE TRUE!

LOIS, THIS HAS TO DO WITH HIM-- AND MORGAN EDGE AS WELL.

AS YOU PROBABLY KNOW, MORGAN AND I HAVE BEEN SEEING A LOT OF EACH OTHER LATELY!

YOU MAY ALSO HAVE NOTICED THAT CLARK'S INTERGANG EXPOSÉ BEGAN APPEARING *SHORTLY* THEREAFTER.

YOU WERE KENT'S INSIDE SOURCE?

I ACTED ANONYMOUSLY. I DIDN'T WANT A BY-LINE--I JUST WANTED TO CONTRIBUTE TO SOMETHING WORTHWHILE!

TO *PROVE* MYSELF TO PEOPLE LIKE YOU.

NOW I'M AFRAID FOR MY SON, *ADAM*, AND FOR *ME*, THAT EDGE WILL FIND OUT. HE'S A *MONSTER*! THE THINGS I'VE SEEN...

I'VE NEVER GONE THAT FAR WITH ANYONE FOR A STORY, CAT, BUT I *HAVE* DONE THINGS I'M ASHAMED OF IN PURSUIT OF A HEADLINE!

WE DO WHAT WE CAN LIVE WITH, I GUESS.

PERRY WHITE WILL HELP US FIGURE THIS OUT!

"< THE PRIEST WAS WRONG. >

"< THE CAVERNOUS ASTEROID WHICH HAS BEEN HOME TO HIM IS FAR REMOVED FROM THE HUB THAT IS WARWORLD.

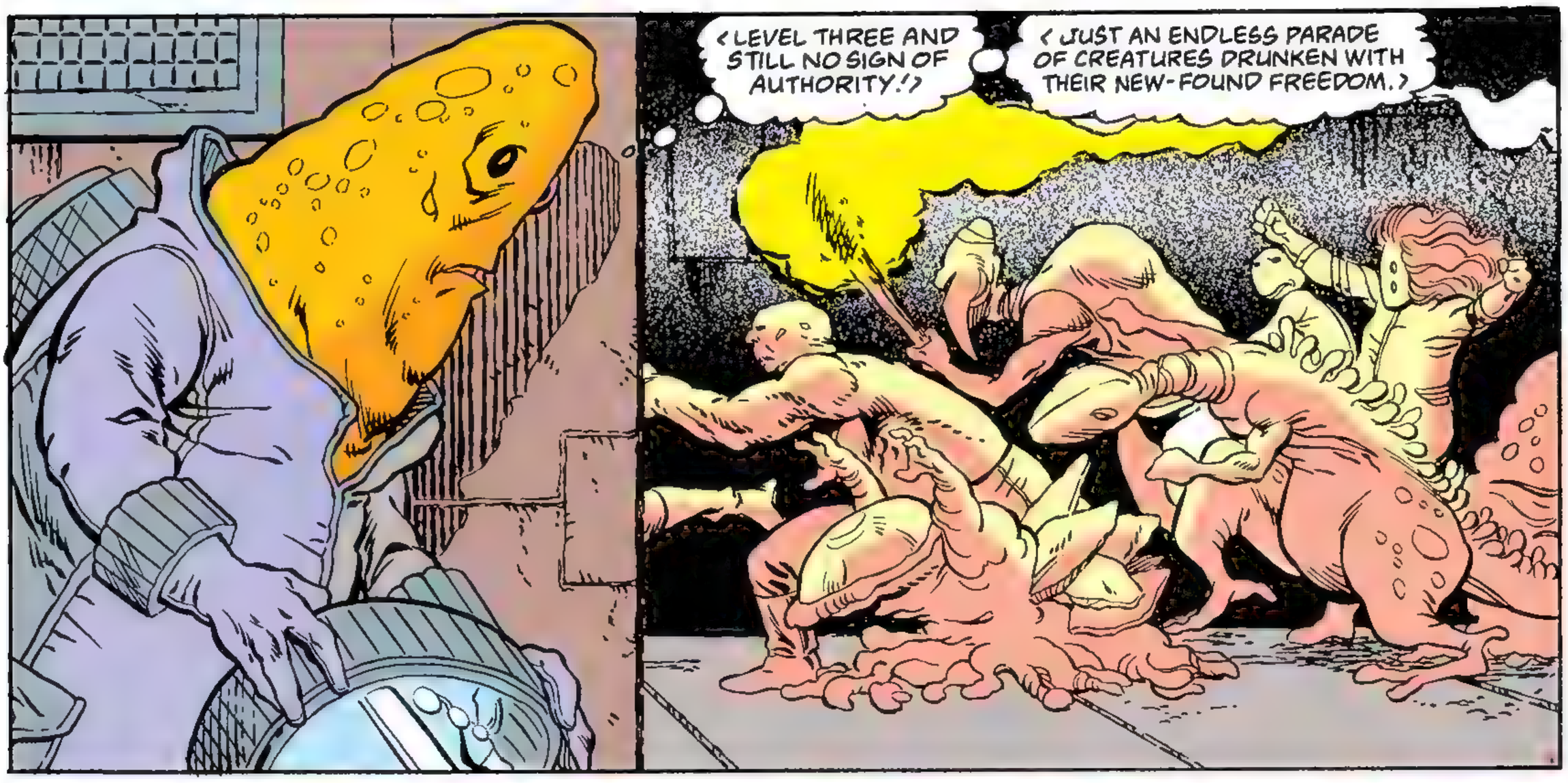
"< WHO COULD HAVE GUESSED THAT THE FALL HERE COULD COME SO QUICKLY? >

"< THE SIGHTS BEFORE ME SHOW ME THAT THE CHAOS HAS SPREAD TO THE PRISON PLANET. FEAR DRIVES THROUGH ME -- FEAR FOR MY FRIEND, LENTRA. >"

< THERE *SHOULD* BE GUARDS STATIONED AT THESE ENTRANCES TO THE SLAVE TERMINALS. >

<IF THESE PRISONERS HAVE OVERTAKEN SUCH HEAVILY ARMED JAILERS, I HAD BEST TRAVEL IN THE SHADOWS... >

<... FOR I AM NO FIGHTER, I AM MERELY A KEEPER OF KEYS! >

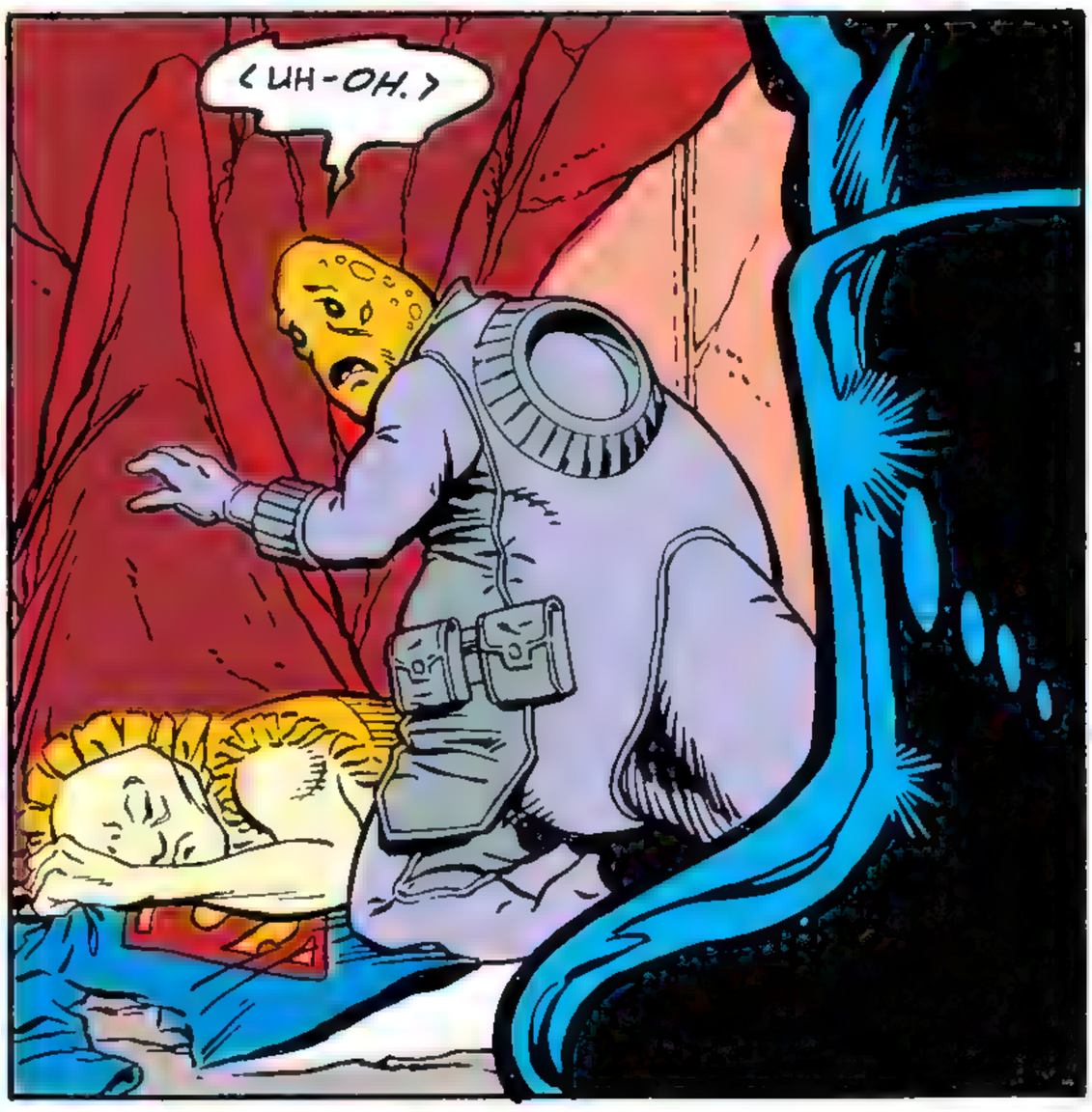

‹LEVEL THREE AND STILL NO SIGN OF AUTHORITY.!›
‹JUST AN ENDLESS PARADE OF CREATURES DRUNKEN WITH THEIR NEW-FOUND FREEDOM.›

‹GOOD FORTUNE SHINES ON ME--ATTENDANT'S CHAMBER SIX-FIFTY IS JUST AHEAD...›

‹...AND NO ONE HAS SPIED ME YET.!›

‹LENTRA! I'VE COME FOR YOU--›

‹LENTRA!!›


‹UH-OH.›

‹DO YOU KNOW THE PRICE OF TREASON, MY LITTLE 'BLURPY ONE'? *SLOW DEATH!* THE WOMAN TOLD NOTHING I DIDN'T ALREADY *KNOW*...›

‹... THOUGH IT DIDN'T DIMINISH THE PLEASURE I TOOK IN BREAKING HER MANY LIMBS! YOU AND SHE WERE IN LEAGUE WITH THE KRYPTONIAN!?

‹G-G-GREAT *M-MONGUL*--THE KRYPTONIAN IS *DEAD!*›

‹HE *LIVES!* MY *AMULET* STRUCK HIM NOT! THERE WERE NO ASHES FROM HIS BODY--NO *LIFE-ESSENCE* TO SAVOR!?

‹THIS HAS ALL BEEN ORCHESTRATED TO UNDERMINE MY AUTHORITY! YOU'VE TURNED MY KINGDOM AGAINST ME! YOU, THE WOMAN, THAT *KRYPTONIAN*...?

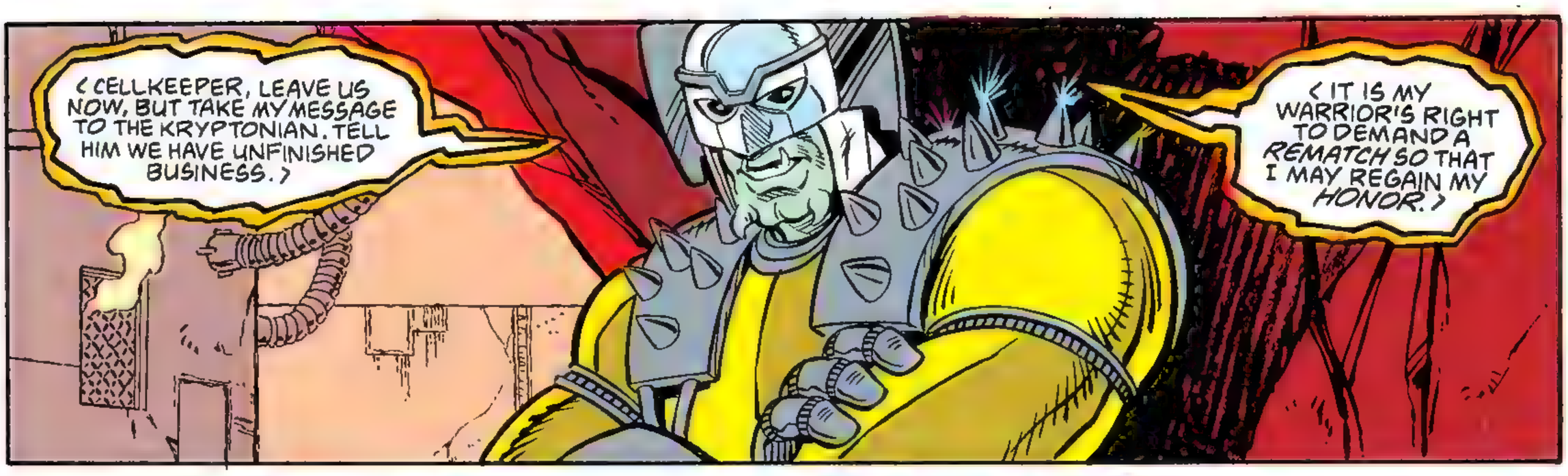
‹... AND THE OLD *PRIEST!* DID YOU TRULY THINK YOU WENT TO HIM UNNOTICED ALL THESE YEARS??

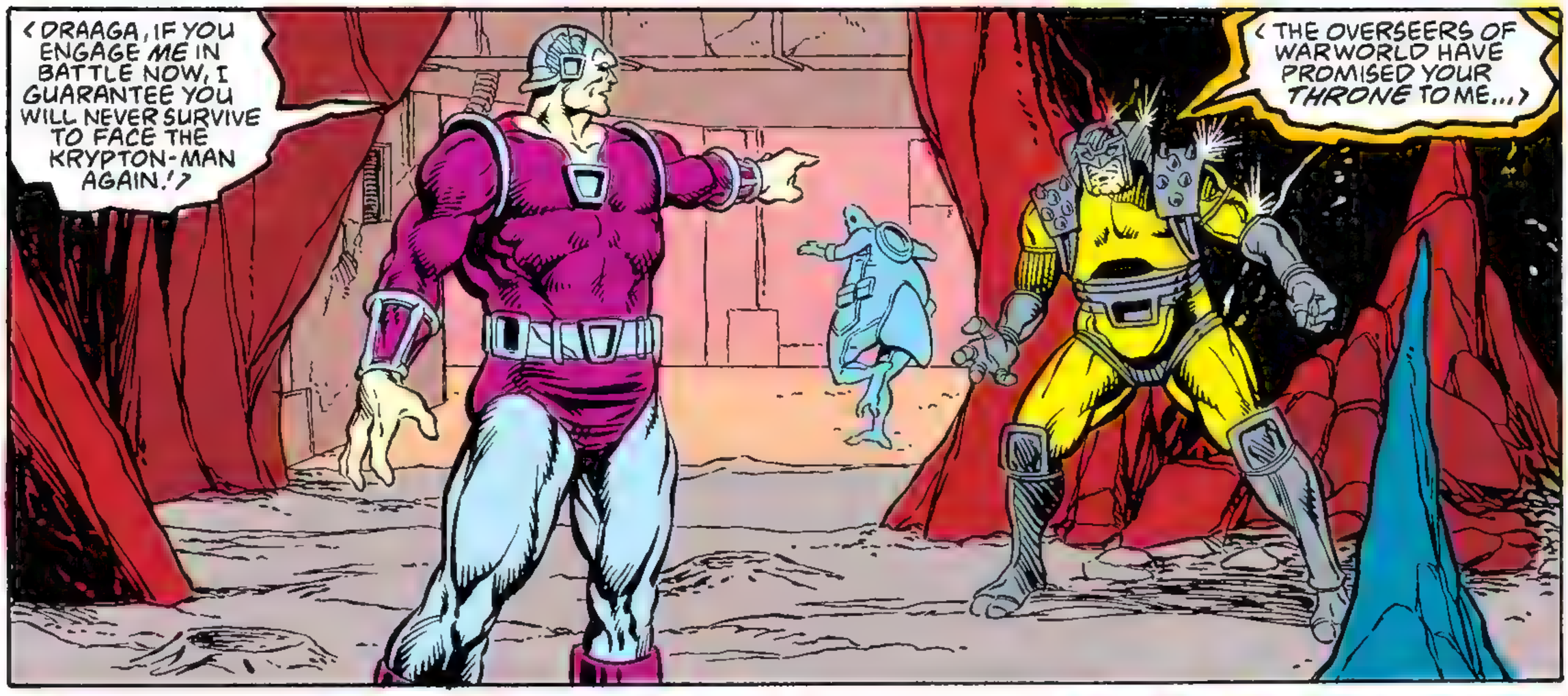
‹MY MISTAKE IS THAT I'VE WAITED TOO LONG TO ACT ON MY KNOWLEDGE, AND NOW IT MAY *COST* ME MY EMPIRE!?

‹IS THE KRYPTONIAN WITH THE OLD MAN? *TELL ME!*?

THWAP

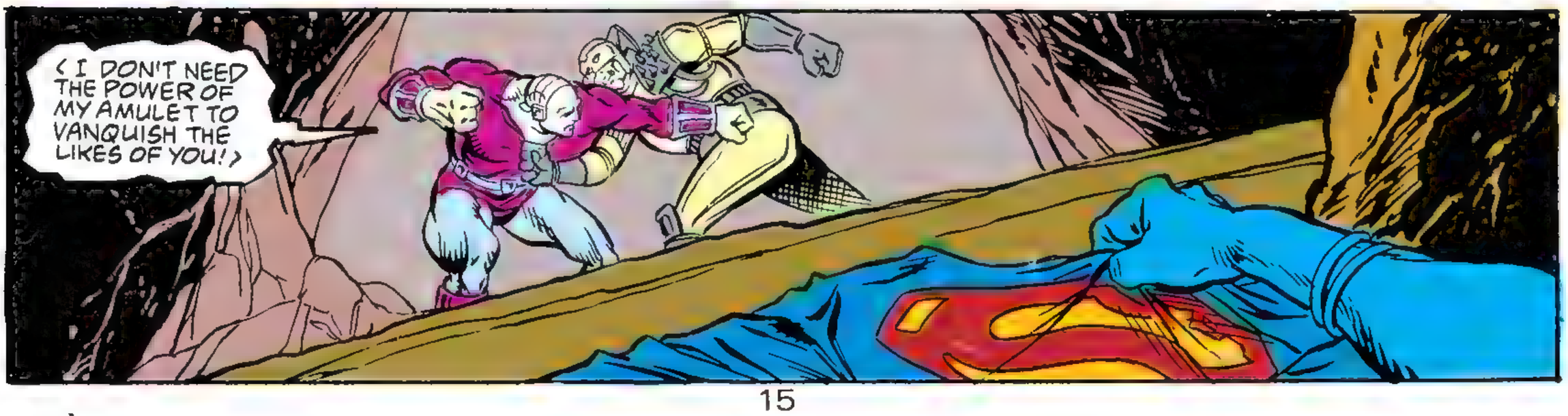
‹IF YOU SPEAK THE *TRUTH*, THEN I SHALL NOT BE *CHEATED* OF MY *DEATH-RITE* AFTER ALL!?


〈CELLKEEPER, LEAVE US NOW, BUT TAKE MY MESSAGE TO THE KRYPTONIAN. TELL HIM WE HAVE UNFINISHED BUSINESS.〉
〈IT IS MY WARRIOR'S RIGHT TO DEMAND A REMATCH SO THAT I MAY REGAIN MY HONOR.〉


〈DRAAGA, IF YOU ENGAGE ME IN BATTLE NOW, I GUARANTEE YOU WILL NEVER SURVIVE TO FACE THE KRYPTON-MAN AGAIN!〉
〈THE OVERSEERS OF WARWORLD HAVE PROMISED YOUR THRONE TO ME...〉

〈...PROVIDED I RID THEIR WORLD OF YOU!〉

〈THE LACKEY SWITCHES MASTERS, EH? SO BE IT!〉


〈I DON'T NEED THE POWER OF MY AMULET TO VANQUISH THE LIKES OF YOU!〉

<KAL-EL, I HAVE BEEN CARETAKER TO YOUR INHERITANCE FOR COUNTLESS YEARS...>

<...HOPING, SOMEHOW *KNOWING*, THAT SOMEDAY YOU WOULD ARRIVE TO CLAIM IT.>

<IF IT IS BY DIVINE RIGHT TIED TO YOUR DESTINY...>

<...IT MAY HAVE PLAYED A PART IN *BRINGING* YOU TO WARWORLD.>

WHA-WHAT DO I *DO* WITH IT?

<WELCOME IT...>

<...WELCOME IT AS I *CANNOT*--AS ONLY SOMEONE OF TRUE KRYPTONIAN HERITAGE CAN...?>

WELL, IT *DOES* TICKLE...

<LET IT TOUCH DEEPER THAN THE PHYSICAL PLANE...>

<LET IT SEE YOUR *SOUL*...>

WHOA! THESE AREN'T MY CLOTHES! THIS IS WHAT MY FATHER, JOR-EL, WORE WHEN HE APPEARED TO ME!

I DON'T UNDERSTAND!

< WHAT WERE YOUR THOUGHTS AS THE BOND WAS MADE?>

I--I WAS THINKING OF HOW MUCH I'D COME TO HATE THE UNIFORM OF THE *GLADIATOR*--IT'S SILLY, REALLY, BUT...

< IT ATTEMPTED TO INDULGE YOUR WHIM, AND OUTFITTED YOU IN NATIVE KRYPTONIAN RAIMENT. IT KNEW NO DIFFERENT. >

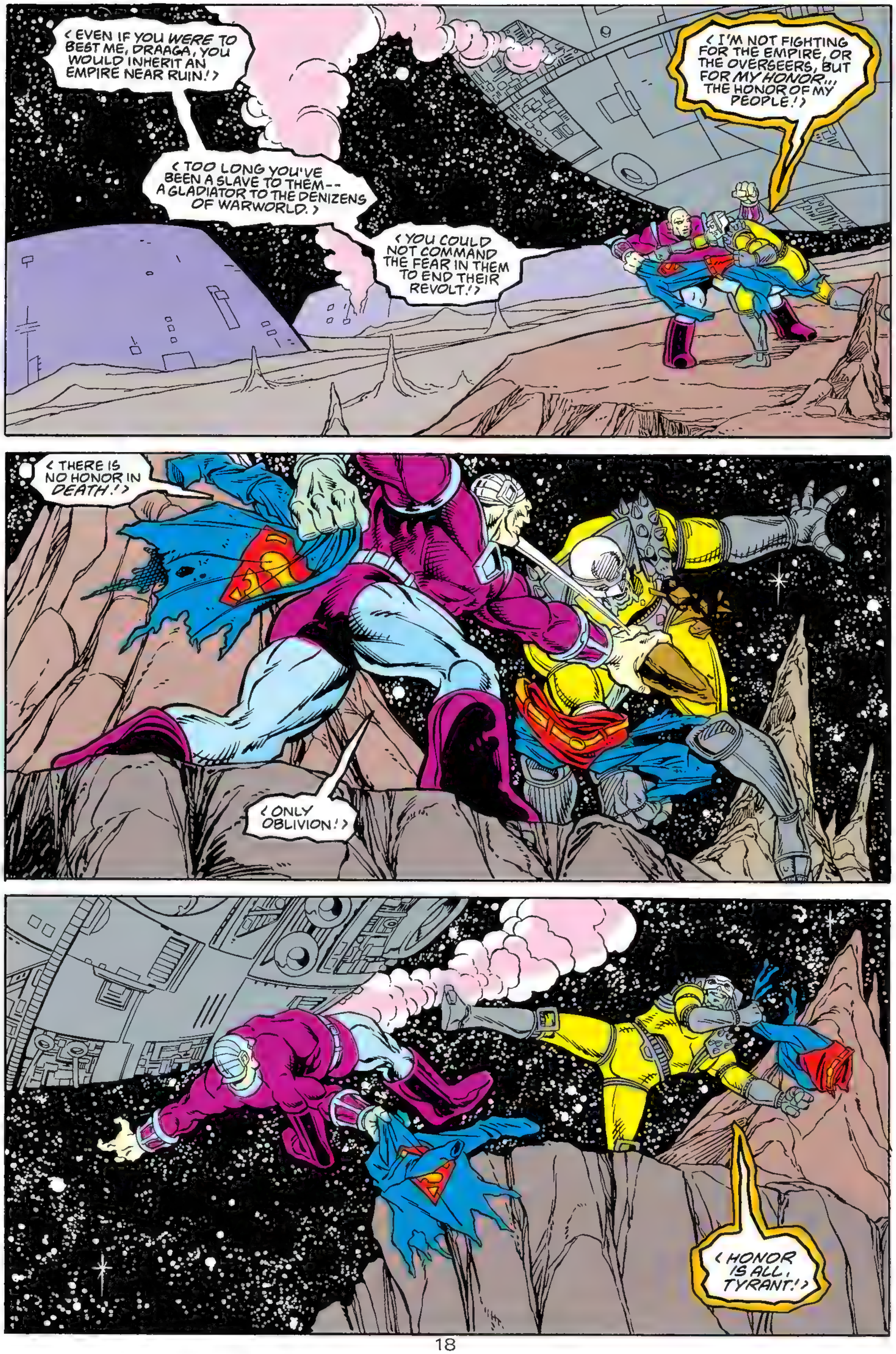
<ALL I CAN ADVISE IS TO OPEN YOURSELF TO IT FULLY, AND IT IN TURN WILL OPEN ITSELF TO YOU. >

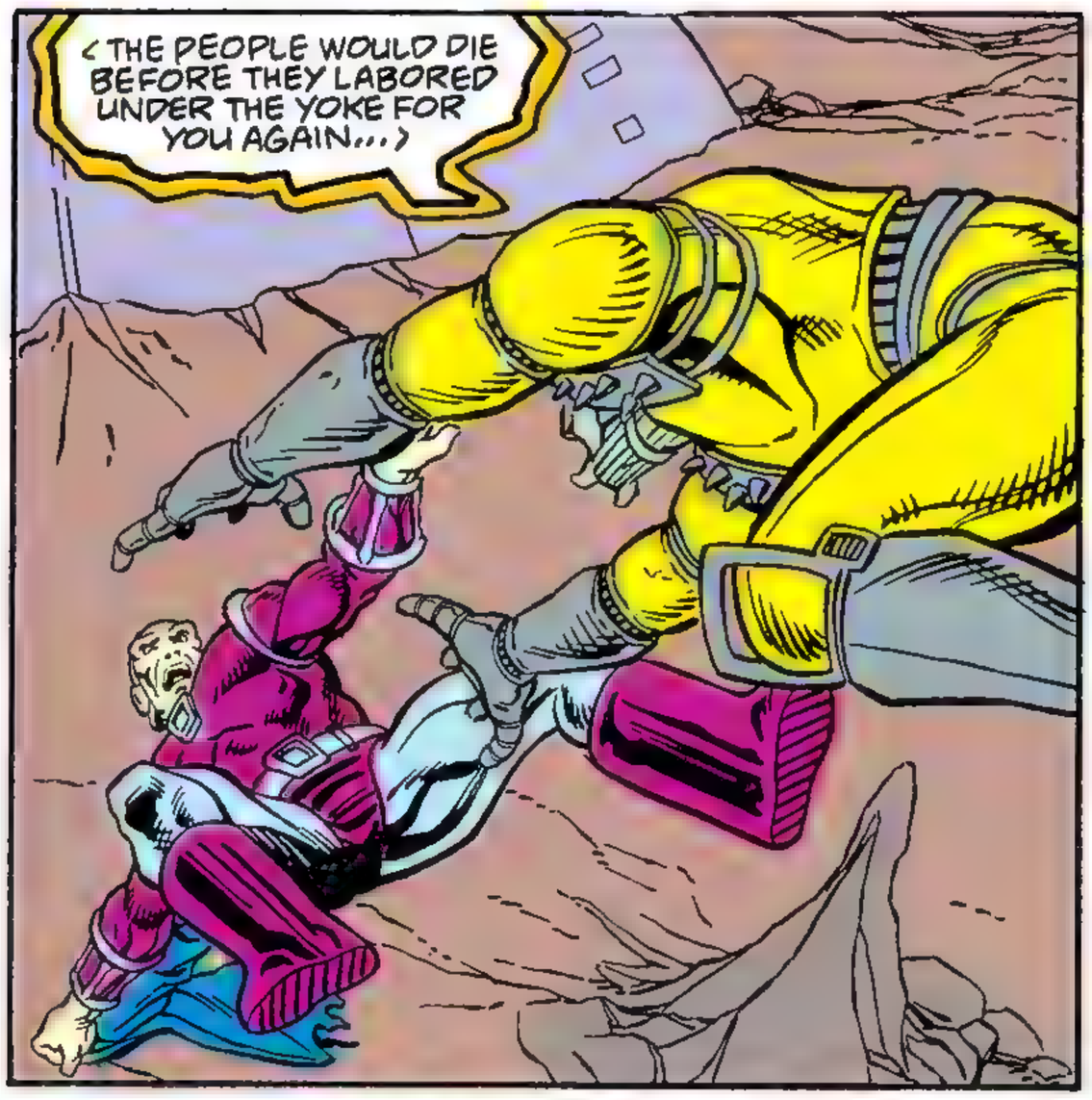
CLERIC, I HAVE GREAT DIFFICULTY BARING MY SOUL TO ANOTHER *BEING*, LET ALONE A *MECHANISM*.

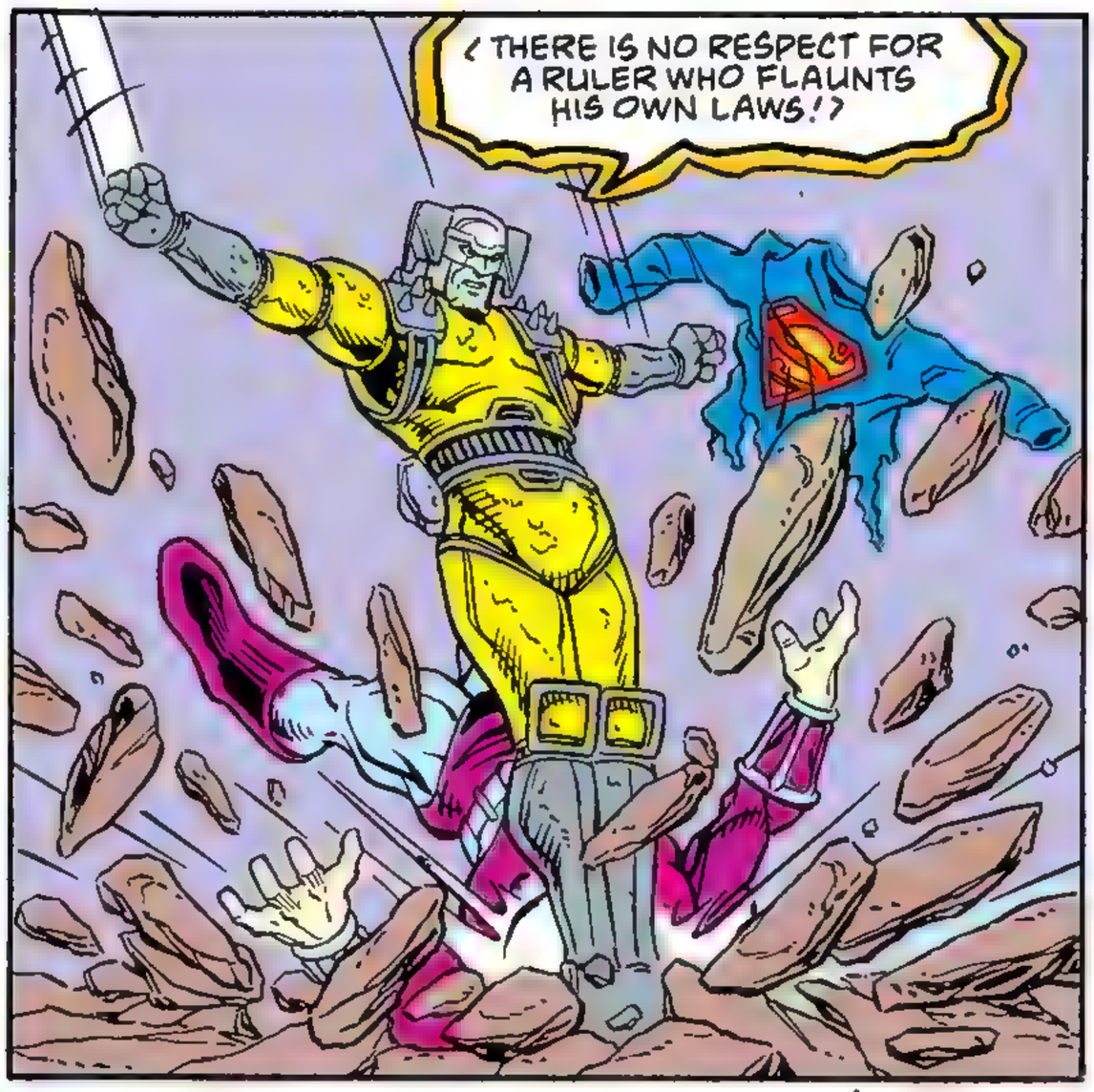
I LEFT MY ADOPTED PLANET *EARTH* BECAUSE OF THINGS I DID THAT I COULDN'T OWN UP TO-- *THINGS* I WAS ASHAMED OF...

< THE ARTIFACT WILL NOT JUDGE YOU. IT HAS GIVEN ME A MEANS TO ATONE FOR MY GUILT OVER THINGS PAST. >

< SHOW IT ONLY WHAT YOU CAN. IT WILL DECIDE TRUTHS.


< EVEN IF YOU WERE TO BEST ME, DRAAGA, YOU WOULD INHERIT AN EMPIRE NEAR RUIN! >
< TOO LONG YOU'VE BEEN A SLAVE TO THEM-- A GLADIATOR TO THE DENIZENS OF WARWORLD. >
< YOU COULD NOT COMMAND THE FEAR IN THEM TO END THEIR REVOLT! >
< I'M NOT FIGHTING FOR THE EMPIRE, OR THE OVERSEERS, BUT FOR MY HONOR... THE HONOR OF MY PEOPLE! >
< THERE IS NO HONOR IN DEATH! >
< ONLY OBLIVION! >
< HONOR IS ALL, TYRANT! >


‹THE PEOPLE WOULD DIE BEFORE THEY LABORED UNDER THE YOKE FOR YOU AGAIN...›


‹THERE IS NO RESPECT FOR A RULER WHO FLAUNTS HIS OWN LAWS!›

‹I'VE HEARD *ENOUGH*!›

‹YOU'RE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS REVOLT! IF YOU HAD KILLED THAT "*SUPERMAN*" DURING THE CONTESTS...›

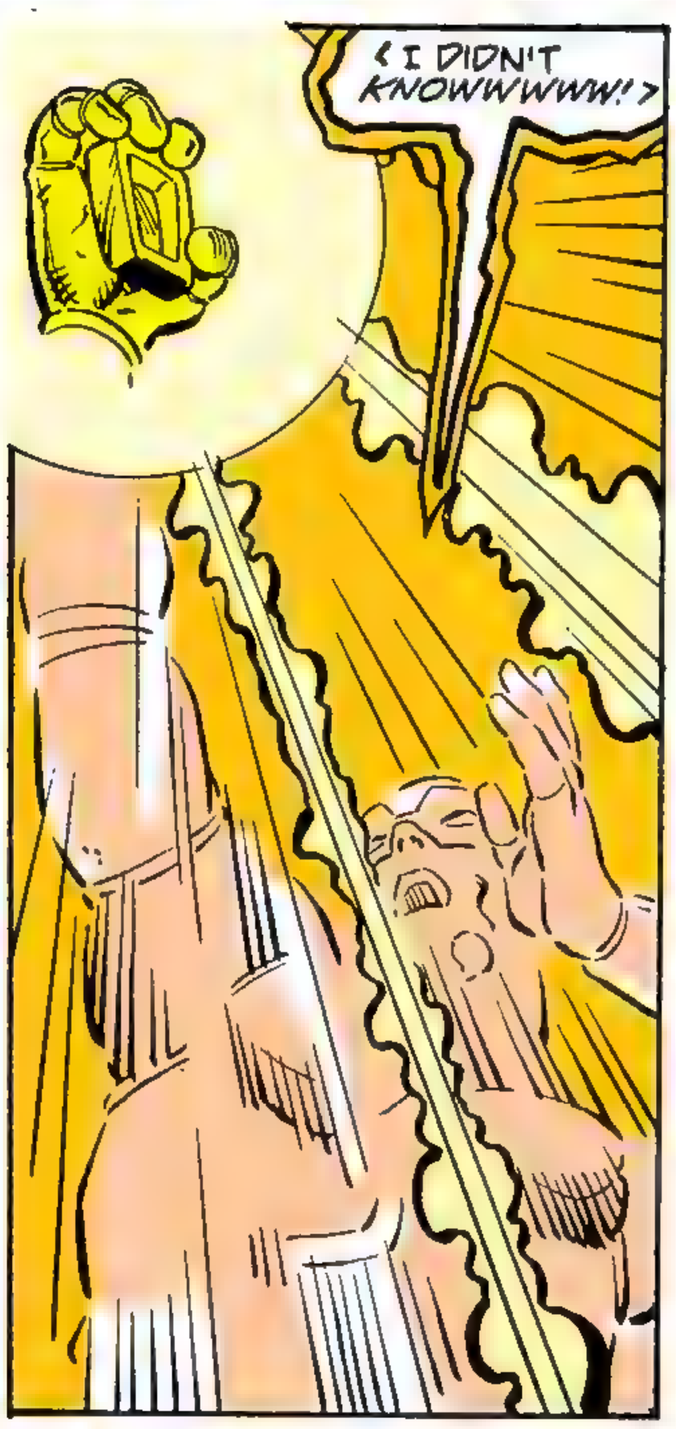
‹...*NONE* OF THIS WOULD HAVE HAPPENED!›

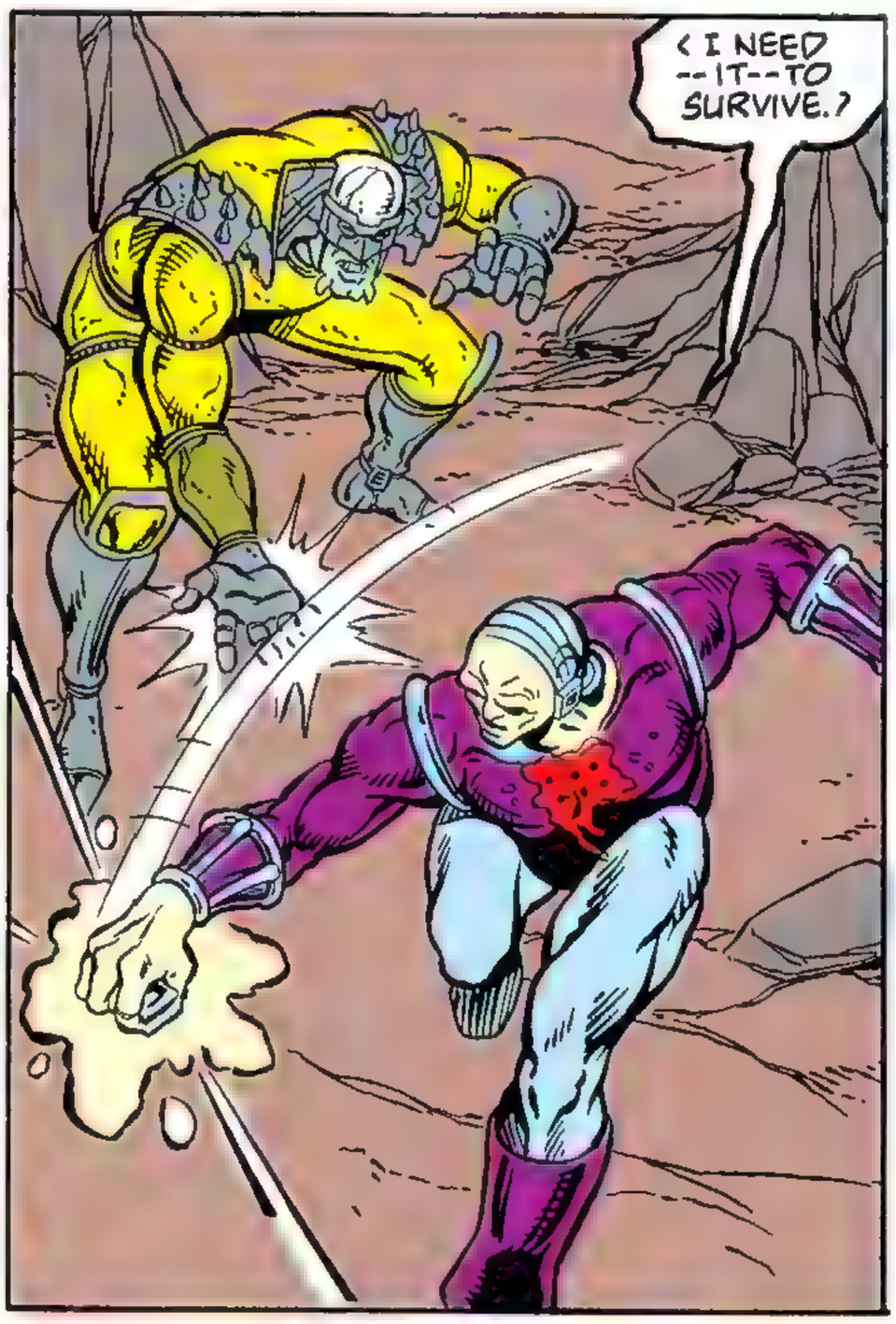
‹THE *GAMES* ARE OVER--THEY'VE ENDED *NOW*!›

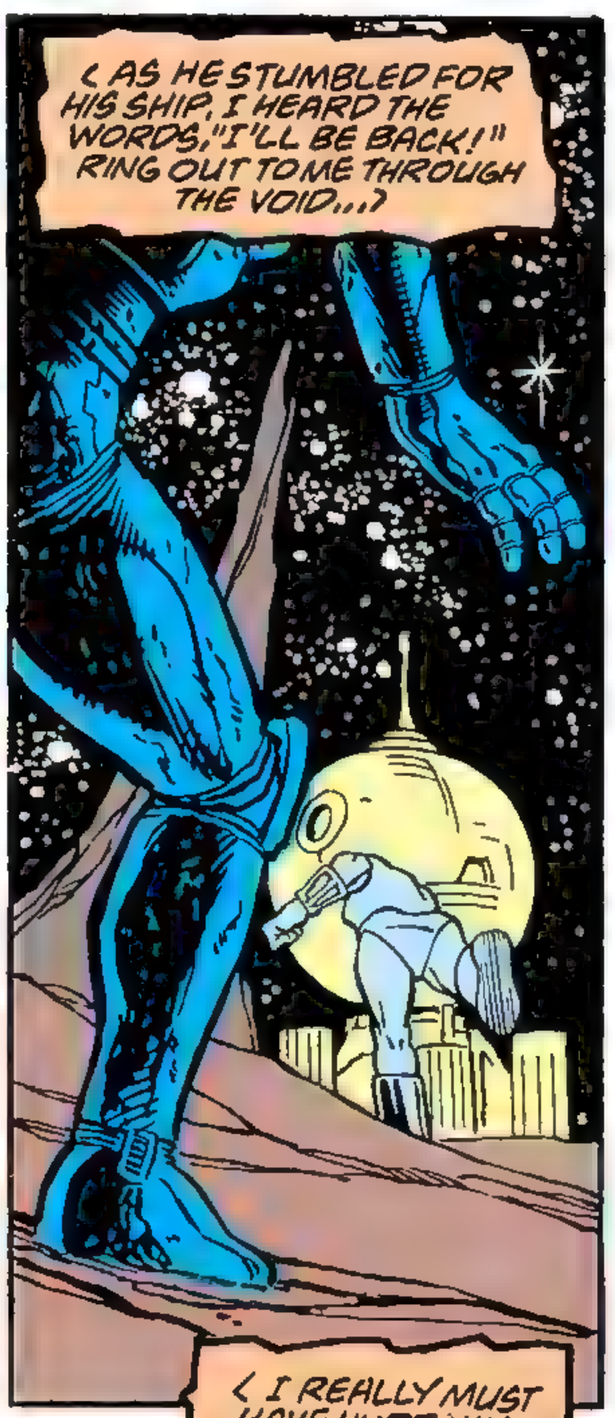
< TRUE.! >
< BECAUSE YOU'VE LEFT YOURSELF VULNERABLE, MONGUL.! >
< NO.! DON'T PULL ON THE AMULET! YAAARGH.! >

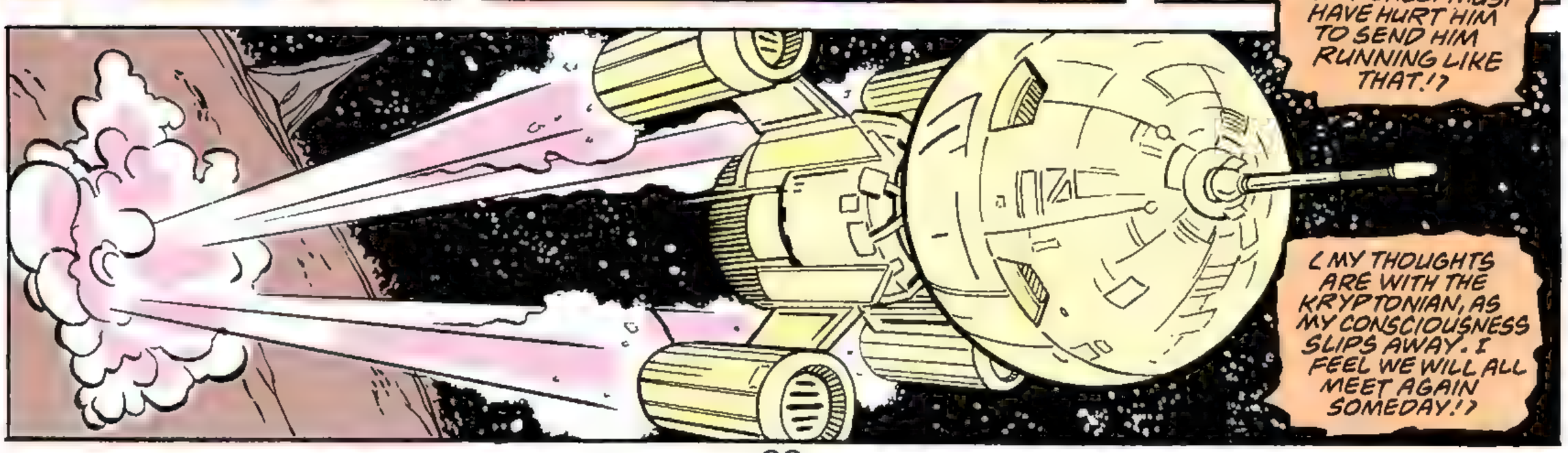
< THE OVERSEERS BETRAYED MY SECRET TO YOU.! >

< THEY TOLD ME THEY BUILT IT SPECIALLY FOR YOU. BUT... >


< I DIDN'T KNOWWWWW! >


< I NEED --IT-- TO SURVIVE. >


< AS HE STUMBLED FOR HIS SHIP, I HEARD THE WORDS, "I'LL BE BACK!" RING OUT TO ME THROUGH THE VOID... >


< I REALLY MUST HAVE HURT HIM TO SEND HIM RUNNING LIKE THAT.! ?
< MY THOUGHTS ARE WITH THE KRYPTONIAN, AS MY CONSCIOUSNESS SLIPS AWAY. I FEEL WE WILL ALL MEET AGAIN SOMEDAY.! >

"I FEEL THAT I'M READY TO TRY AGAIN, CLERIC."

"< TRUST IN YOURSELF TO PROJECT AN HONEST IMAGE OF YOURSELF INTO THE ARTIFACT, KAL-EL. >"

I AM CONFIDENT.

< REACH OUT TO IT... >

IT--IT'S TAKING MY ARM!

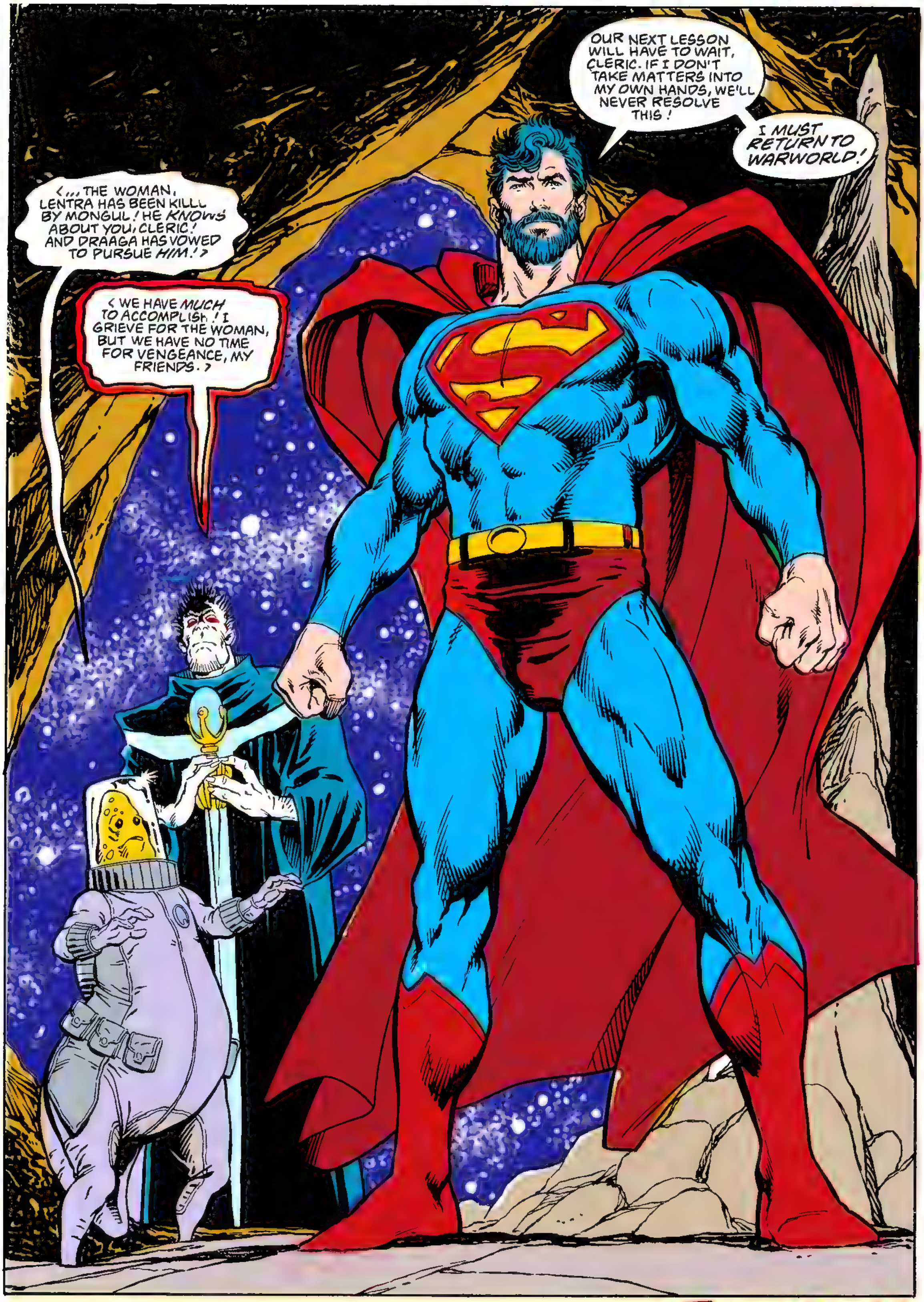
< DON'T STOP. GIVE YOURSELF TO IT! >

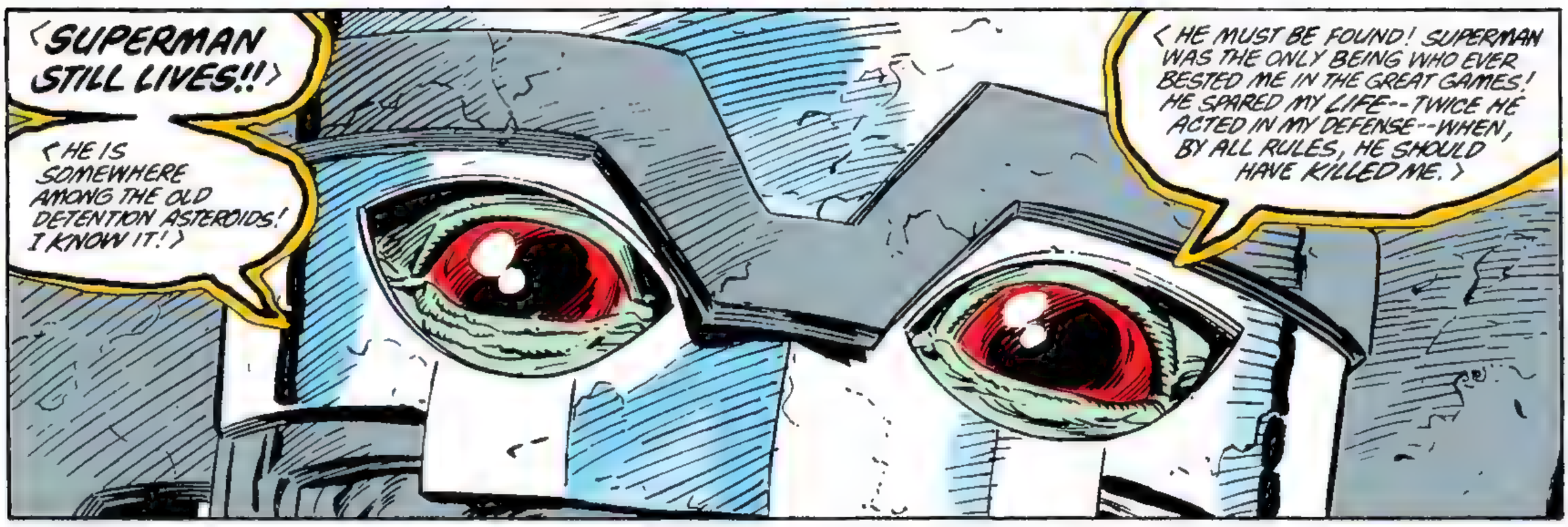
< CLERIC! WARWORLD IS IN RU--- >

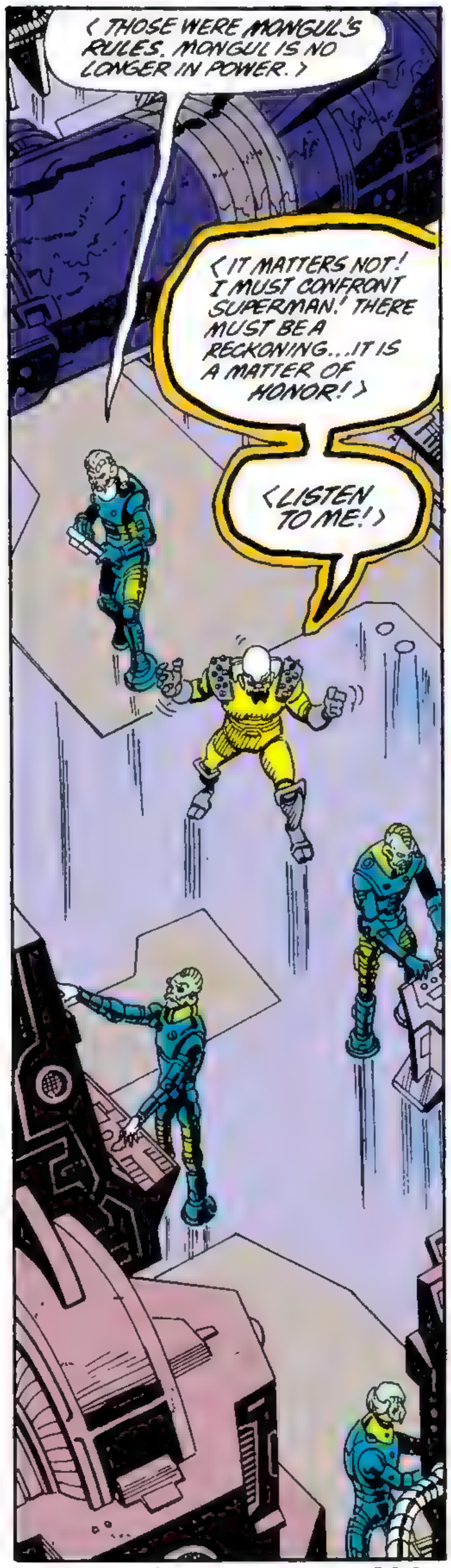
IT'S RESISTING...

...NO --JUST UNSURE...

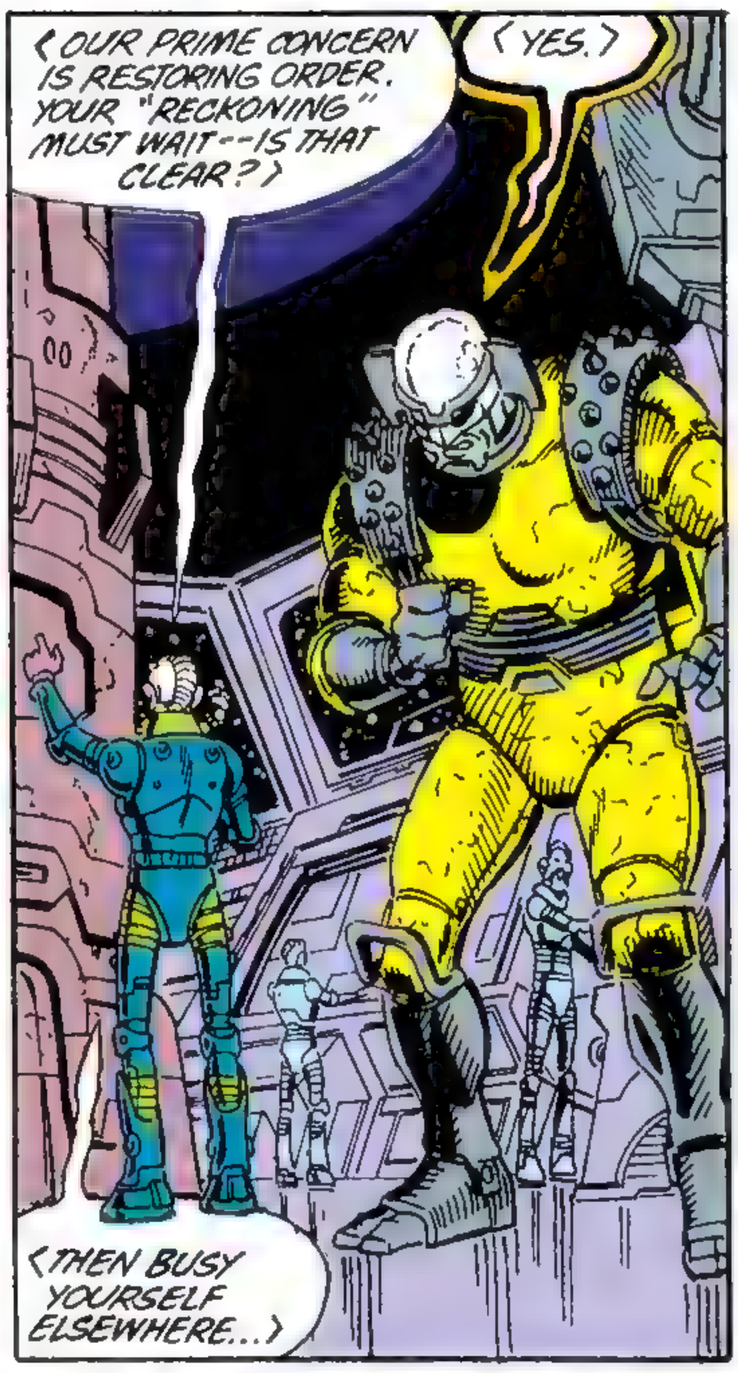
< PERHAPS *THIS* INFORMATION CAN HELP YOU WITH WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE... >

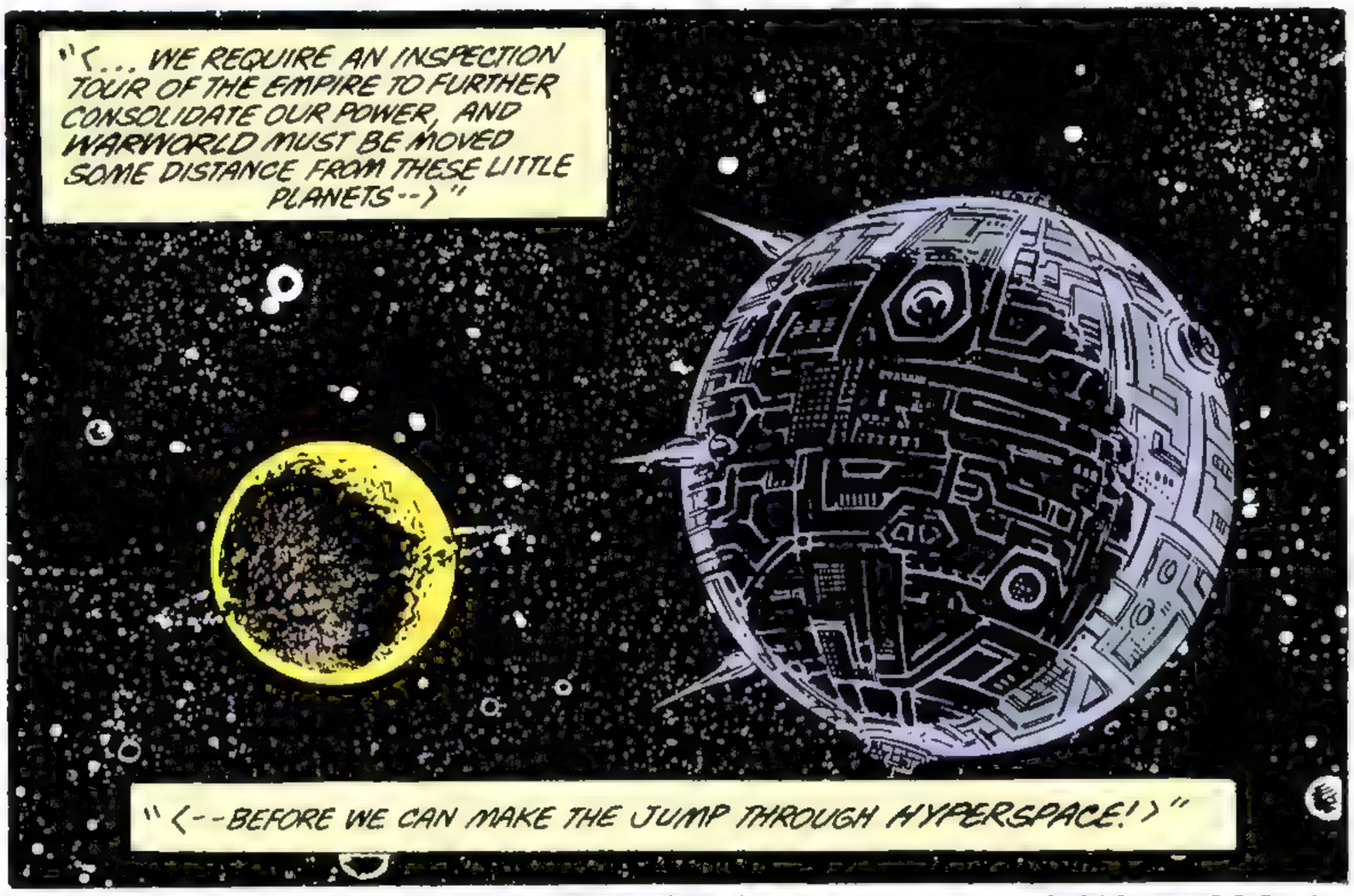

OUR NEXT LESSON WILL HAVE TO WAIT, CLERIC. IF I DON'T TAKE MATTERS INTO MY OWN HANDS, WE'LL NEVER RESOLVE THIS!
I MUST RETURN TO WARWORLD!
<...THE WOMAN, LENTRA HAS BEEN KILLED BY MONGUL! HE KNOWS ABOUT YOU, CLERIC! AND DRAAGA HAS VOWED TO PURSUE HIM!>
<WE HAVE MUCH TO ACCOMPLISH! I GRIEVE FOR THE WOMAN, BUT WE HAVE NO TIME FOR VENGEANCE, MY FRIENDS.>
CONTINUED IN SUPERMAN #33 "TWO DESTINIES"
THEN JOIN US BACK HERE IN THIRTY DAYS FOR THE COMING OF..
TURMOIL!


〈SUPERMAN STILL LIVES!!〉
〈HE IS SOMEWHERE AMONG THE OLD DETENTION ASTEROIDS! I KNOW IT!〉
〈HE MUST BE FOUND! SUPERMAN WAS THE ONLY BEING WHO EVER BESTED ME IN THE GREAT GAMES! HE SPARED MY LIFE--TWICE HE ACTED IN MY DEFENSE--WHEN, BY ALL RULES, HE SHOULD HAVE KILLED ME.〉


〈THOSE WERE MONGUL'S RULES. MONGUL IS NO LONGER IN POWER.〉
〈IT MATTERS NOT! I MUST CONFRONT SUPERMAN! THERE MUST BE A RECKONING...IT IS A MATTER OF HONOR!〉
〈LISTEN TO ME!〉

〈NO, DRAAGA...YOU LISTEN TO US! OUR ANCESTORS BUILT THIS SHIP, THIS "WARWORLD" AS IT IS NOW KNOWN... WE ALONE KNOW HOW TO MAINTAIN IT. AND WITH MONGUL'S REIGN ENDED, WE ARE AGAIN IN CONTROL!〉
〈YOU ARE ONLY A FIGUREHEAD, A HERO IMAGE FOR THE PEOPLE TO RALLY AROUND.〉




"〈... WE REQUIRE AN INSPECTION TOUR OF THE EMPIRE TO FURTHER CONSOLIDATE OUR POWER, AND WARWORLD MUST BE MOVED SOME DISTANCE FROM THESE LITTLE PLANETS--〉"
"〈--BEFORE WE CAN MAKE THE JUMP THROUGH HYPERSPACE!〉"

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SHEATHED IN PROTECTIVE NULL-GRAVITY FIELDS, THE GIGANTIC ARTIFICIAL WORLD SWIFTLY RECEDES FROM THE DESOLATE PRISON PLANET AND ITS ATTENDANT ASTEROIDS, CAUSING NOT A BOBBLE IN THEIR ORBITS.

ONLY ONE THING DARES CHALLENGE THE DEPARTURE.

IT IS A TINY SPECK OF MATTER ON THE COSMIC SCALE...

...BUT THAT SPECK POSSESSES POWER AND INTELLECT--

--AND A DETERMINATION THAT CANNOT BE MEASURED ON ANY SCALE!

YET, DESPITE HIS POWER AND DETERMINATION, THIS STRANGE BEING FROM ANOTHER PLANET CANNOT CLOSE ENOUGH OF THE DISTANCE BETWEEN HIMSELF AND WARWORLD--

--AND MUST WATCH HELPLESSLY AS IT VANISHES THROUGH HYPERSPACE.

GONE. NO WAY I CAN FOLLOW NOW.

GOT TO GO BACK... WHILE THERE'S STILL BREATH LEFT IN MY BODY.

MY LUNGS ALREADY FEEL LIKE SCORCHED *SANDPAPER*... I HAVEN'T BEEN GONE *THAT* LONG, HAVE I?

WHAT'S *WRONG* WITH ME? I USED TO BE ABLE TO LIVE ON A LUNGFUL OF AIR FOR TWO OR THREE *HOURS!* GOT TO USE THE MAIN PLANET'S GRAVITY TO HELP SWING ME BACK--

--TO THE *CLERIC'S*... WHAT'D HE CALL THIS CHUNK OF ROCK?... THE *PARIAH PENITENTIARY?*

THERE'S... THE CAVE ENTRANCE. GOT TO MAKE IT... JUST A FEW MORE YARDS.

HAHH! FINALLY... I CAN... *BREATHE* AGAIN!

<PRAISE THE *DIVINE!*>

<I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU AND THE CLERIC GET BY ON THE AIR IN *HERE*... IT'S SO LOW IN SULFUR!>

'LONG AS... THERE'S *OXYGEN*, I'LL... TOUGH IT OUT, CELL-KEEPER!

<KRYPTONIAN OR NOT, YOU SCARED ME OUT OF A CYCLE'S GROWTH, FLYING OFF LIKE THAT!>

<WELCOME BACK, MY SON... ENTER AND BE AT PEACE!>

SUPERMAN®

Created by JERRY SIEGEL & JOE SHUSTER

<YOUR SUDDEN DEPARTURE ALARMED US, KAL-EL.>

<I UNDERSTAND... ACTION IS YOUR NATURE. BUT AS I TOLD YOU, WE STILL HAVE MUCH TO ACCOMPLISH HERE!>

<COME... YOUR LEGACY BECKONS!>

JUST A MINUTE, CLERIC...

TWO DESTINIES!

ROGER STERN, writer. KERRY GAMMILL, penciller. DENNIS JANKE, inker.
JOHN COSTANZA, letterer. GLENN WHITMORE, colorist. JON PETERSON, assoc. editor.
MIKE CARLIN, editor

... I MEAN NO DISRESPECT, BUT BEFORE I TANGLE WITH THAT *ARTIFACT* OF YOURS AGAIN, THERE ARE A FEW *QUESTIONS* I WANT ANSWERED.

〈 AFTER ALL THAT HAS HAPPENED, YOU WOULD DENY THE CLERIC? 〉

〈 IT IS ALL RIGHT, CELLKEEPER. MEN OF FAITH ARE ACCUSTOMED TO ENCOUNTERING *DOUBT*. 〉

〈 OBSERVE, MY SON, THE STORE OF IMAGES WITHIN MY MIND... 〉

〈 I KNEW KRYPTON--YOUR PLANET OF ORIGIN--DURING WHAT YOU KNOW AS ITS FIFTH HISTORICAL EPOCH.

〈 I WAS A MISSIONARY THEN, BRINGING MY FAITH TO A TROUBLED WORLD. 〉

〈 YOU MUST RECALL HOW I TOUCHED YOUR MIND WITH THIS KNOWLEDGE--7

〈--WHILE YOU FOUGHT IN THE TYRANT MONGUL'S GLADIATORIAL GAMES!〉*

*Action Annual #2

I REMEMBER... MONGUL TRIED TO KILL ME FOR DISOBEYING HIM, BUT YOU SOMEHOW TELEPORTED ME TO SAFETY!

〈 'TWAS MY WISH THAT YOU LIVE... A WISH FULFILLED BY THE ERADICATOR! IT PROVIDED THE POWER FOR YOUR RESCUE... EVEN AS IT LATER RESTORED YOUR GARB. 〉*

IT DID A PRETTY MIRACULOUS JOB OF *THAT*, ALL RIGHT...

* Last month in ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN #455

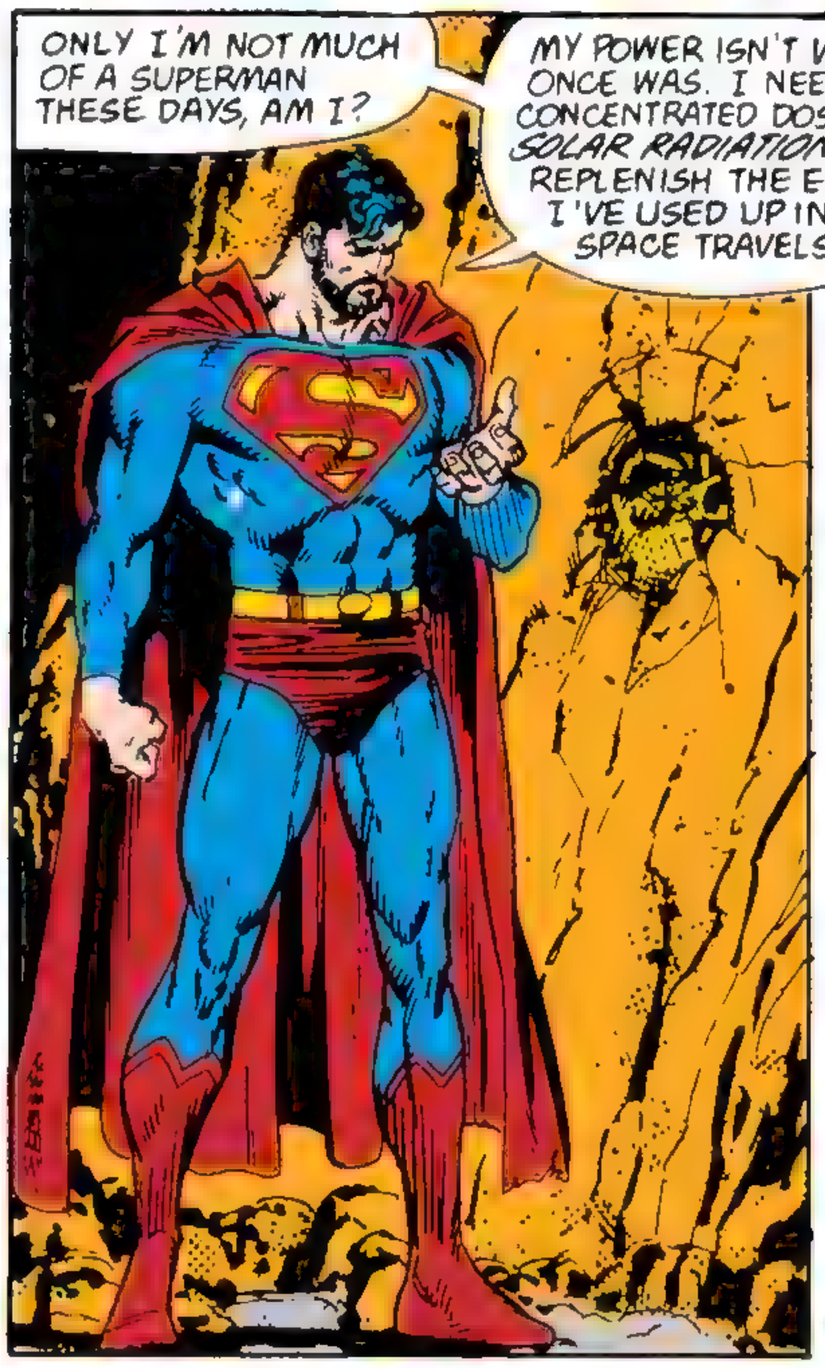
... BUT I THOUGHT THE ERADICATOR WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A *WEAPON*! AND ANOTHER THING--IF YOU WERE ON KRYPTON WHEN YOU CLAIM, YOU'D HAVE TO BE OVER 200,000 YEARS OLD!

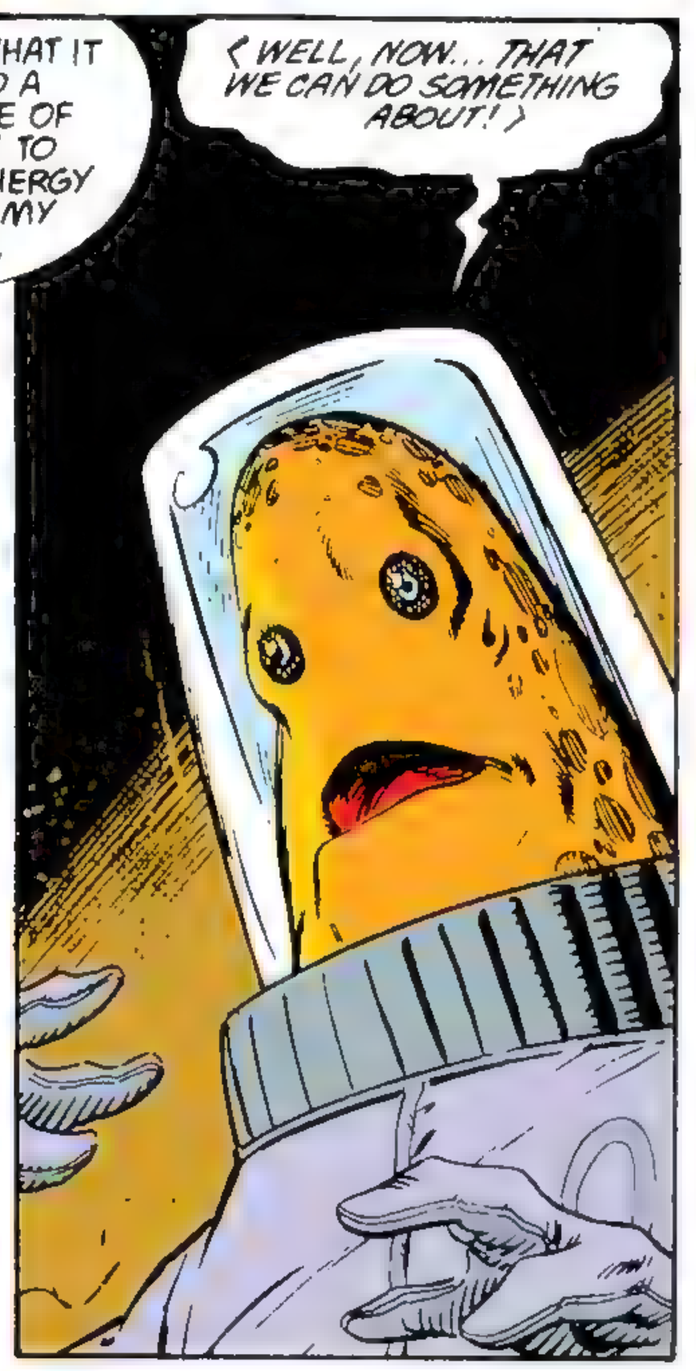
< IT WAS... AND I AM! >
< THE ANCIENT KRYPTONIANS DID DEVELOP THE ERADICATOR FOR USE AS A WEAPON, BUT THE FORCES CONTAINED WITHIN CHANGED IT. IT HAS EVOLVED INTO...SOMETHING MUCH MORE! >
< I BELIEVE IT RESPONSIBLE FOR PRESERVING MY LIFE OVER THE AGES... DESPITE THE DARKNESS OF MY SOUL. >

< I SENSE A GREAT BURDEN UPON YOUR SOUL AS WELL. IF YOU WOULD BUT LET ME, I WOULD GLADLY SHARE THAT BURDEN. >
NO! NO... THANK YOU, BUT IT'S SOMETHING I MUST DEAL WITH.

< BUT, KAL-EL--! >
KAL-EL IS THE NAME I WOULD HAVE HAD ON KRYPTON...

...THE GUILT I BEAR BELONGS TO SUPERMAN!
KRAK


ONLY I'M NOT MUCH OF A SUPERMAN THESE DAYS, AM I?
MY POWER ISN'T WHAT IT ONCE WAS. I NEED A CONCENTRATED DOSE OF SOLAR RADIATION TO REPLENISH THE ENERGY I'VE USED UP IN MY SPACE TRAVELS.


< WELL, NOW... THAT WE CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT! >

EARTH.

IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS OF COLORADO, A PSIONICS RESEARCH FACILITY--RECENTLY ACQUIRED BY A DUMMY CORPORATION OF THE LEXCORP GROUP--IS MADE READY FOR A VERY SPECIAL PATIENT...

... ALL UNDER THE WATCHFUL EYE OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER LEX LUTHOR.

THIS GEAR IS A GODSEND, MR. LUTHOR!

WITH BRAINIAC ALL PLUGGED IN, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO PROBE DEEPER INTO HIS MIND... DESPITE HIS CONDITION!

LET US HOPE SO, HAPPERSEN.

JUST WHAT *IS* HIS CONDITION, KELLEY? HE LOOKS... *GAUNT.*

WHAT DO YOU EXPECT, LEX? HE'S BEEN DRUGGED AND FED INTRAVENOUSLY FOR *WEEKS!* EVENTUALLY, HE'LL JUST WASTE AWAY.

I SEE. WELL, DO WHAT YOU CAN FOR HIM. I WANT HIM KEPT ALIVE AS LONG AS POSSIBLE.

ONCE WE DISCOVER WHAT MAKES BRAINIAC TICK, WE MIGHT VERY WELL BE ABLE TO DUPLICATE HIS INCREDIBLE MENTAL POWERS--BUT THE KNOWLEDGE WITHIN HIS MIND IS OF EVEN GREATER IMPORT!

THAT EMACIATED HUSK HOLDS THE MEMORIES OF A SCIENTIST FROM *ANOTHER PLANET!* IF I CAN ACCESS THOSE MEMORIES...

"... WHO KNOWS WHAT POWER I MIGHT GAIN -- WHAT COSMIC SECRETS I MIGHT LEARN?"

< YOU SEE, SUPERMAN--)

< -- OUR ORBIT HAS ALREADY CARRIED US THROUGH THE PLANETARY PENUMBRA AND INTO THE DIRECT LIGHT OF THE NEAR-STAR!)

< NORMALLY, THESE REFLECTOR PANELS ARE EMPLOYED IN THE CHARGING OF THE EMERGENCY BACK-UPS FOR MY SHIP'S ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS --)

< -- BUT THEY SHOULD HELP YOU "CHARGE UP" AS WELL!)

YES!

YES, I CAN FEEL IT WORKING!

I HAVEN'T FELT SO *ALIVE* SINCE I LEFT EARTH. IT'S LIKE WAKING UP, RESTED AND ALERT, AFTER A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP!

< I AM HAPPY FOR YOU, MY SON! PERHAPS *NOW* YOU ARE AT LAST READY TO CLAIM YOUR *INHERITANCE?*)

MAYBE YOU SHOULD KEEP IT, CLERIC. I'M NOT SURE I'M WORTHY OF SUCH A MIRACLE MACHINE.

< YOU ARE TROUBLED, I KNOW... BUT THIS ARTIFACT CAN HELP YOU ATONE FOR YOUR GUILT. >

I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT.

< ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE. HERE--)

<--LET IT FORGE A LINK BETWEEN US!)

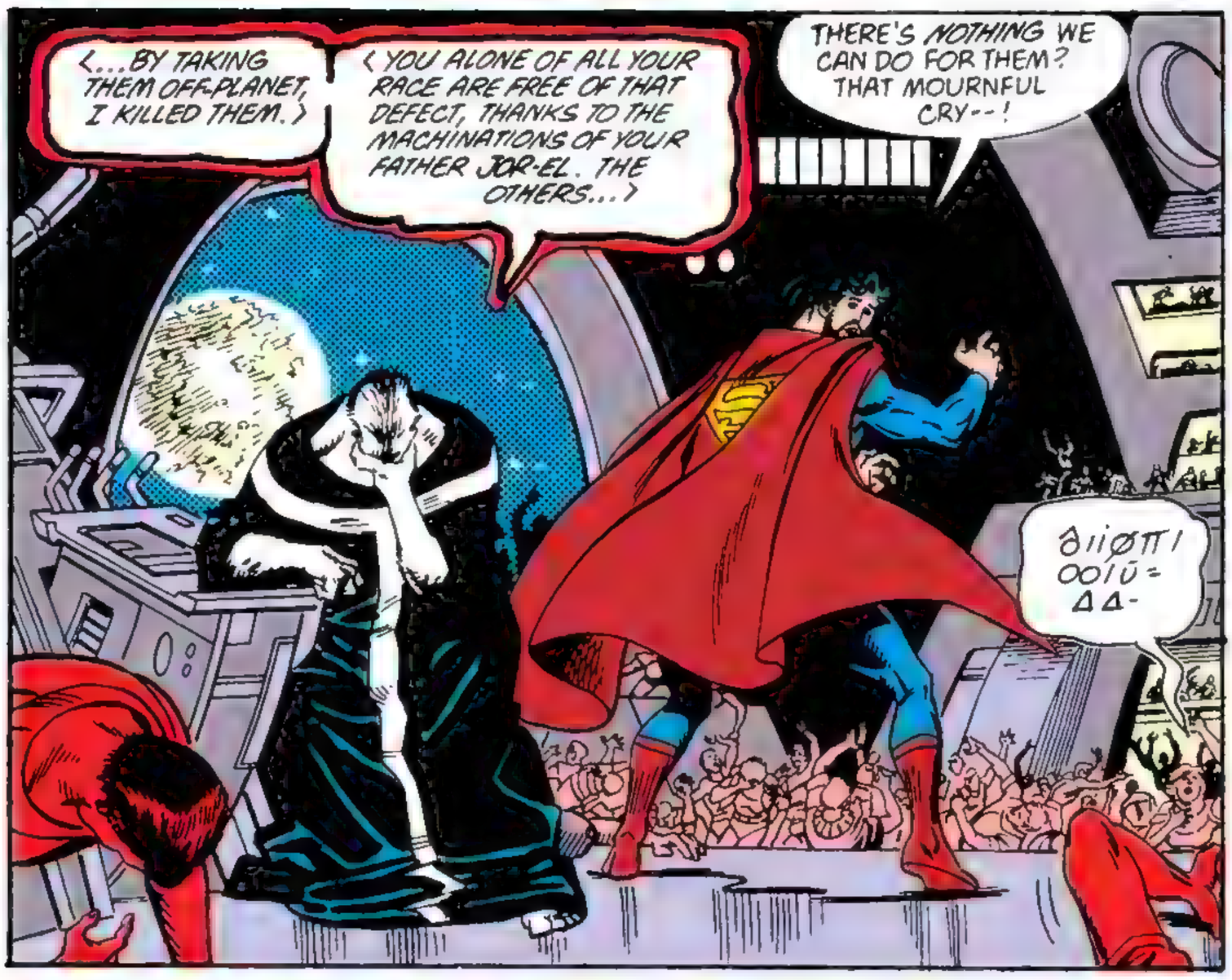
< OPEN YOUR MIND AGAIN... >

<... AND LEARN!>

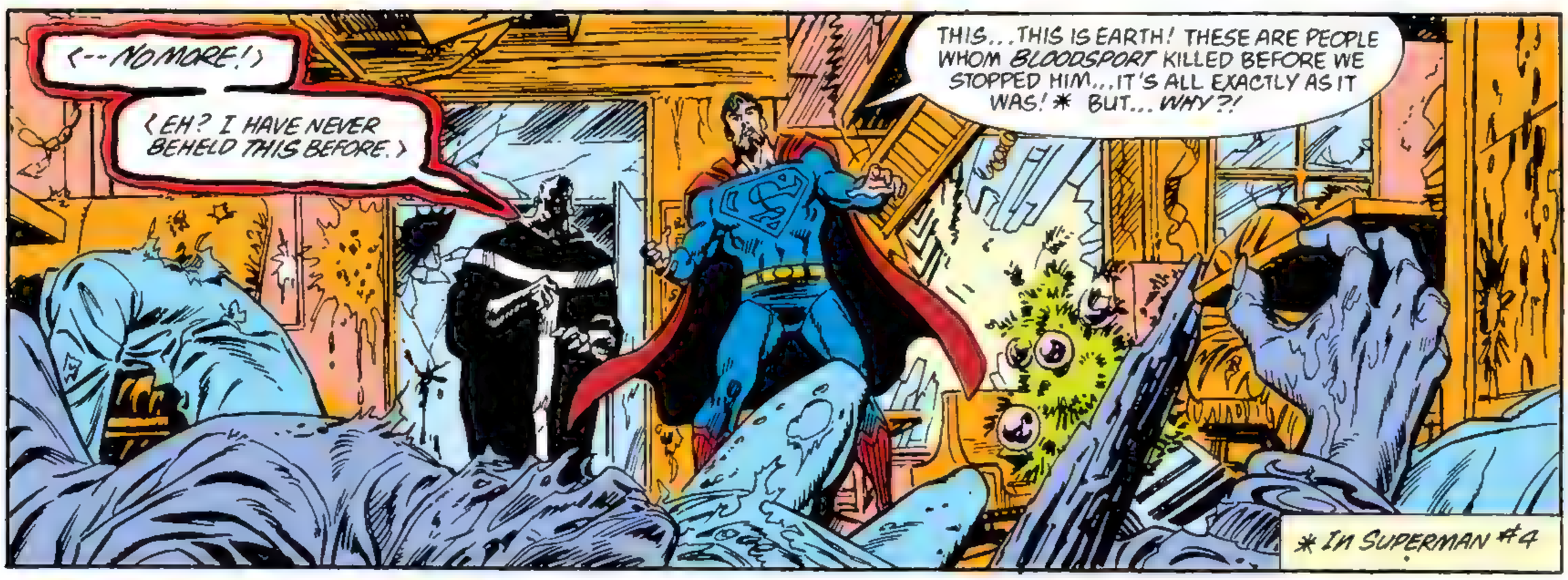
WHA--? CLERIC, WHERE ARE WE?

< MY DARK PAST. THIS GREAT ARK WAS TO TRANSPORT THESE KRYPTONIANS TO THEIR SALVATION... INSTEAD, IT CARRIED THEM TO THEIR DEATHS!)

< I DID NOT KNOW THEN OF THE GENETIC DEFECT WHICH KEPT THE KRYPTONIANS BOUND TO THEIR WORLD... >


‹...BY TAKING THEM OFF-PLANET, I KILLED THEM.›
‹YOU ALONE OF ALL YOUR RACE ARE FREE OF THAT DEFECT, THANKS TO THE MACHINATIONS OF YOUR FATHER JOR-EL. THE OTHERS...›
THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO FOR THEM? THAT MOURNFUL CRY--!
ðiiØΠ! OOIŪ= ΔΔ-

‹THE KRYPTONIAN DEATH-CHANT. I HAVE HEARD IT IN MY DREAMS FOR 200 MILLENNIA! I CAN STAND IT--›


‹--NO MORE!›
‹EH? I HAVE NEVER BEHELD THIS BEFORE.›
THIS...THIS IS EARTH! THESE ARE PEOPLE WHOM BLOODSPORT KILLED BEFORE WE STOPPED HIM...IT'S ALL EXACTLY AS IT WAS! * BUT... WHY?!
* IN SUPERMAN #4

‹PERHAPS FOR THE SAME REASON MY MIND RECREATED THE ARK. PERHARS THIS WEIGHS ON YOUR CONSCIENCE?›

I COULDN'T SAVE THEM... I WASN'T THERE IN TIME. I CAN'T BE EVERY-WHERE.

BUT THERE'S SO MUCH TO BE DONE! SO MANY THREATS...

. . . IT'S LIKE A NEVER-ENDING BATTLE.

CLERIC? WHAT'S HAPPENING?!

< THE ERADICATOR IS REFLECTING YOUR CONFUSION--)

<--IF WE ARE TO LEARN ANYTHING, YOU MUST CLEAR YOUR MIND AND FOCUS ON YOUR PAST. . .)

"<. . . PERHAPS IF YOU CONCENTRATE ON YOUR FATHER!) "

< CLERIC? SUPERMAN? ARE YOU WELL?)

< THEY'VE STOOD IMMOBILE EVER SINCE THEY JOINED HANDS ON THAT. . . THING. THEIR ONLY SIGNS OF MOVEMENT HAVE BEEN FACIAL CONTORTIONS.)

"< WHAT COULD THEY BE GOING THROUGH?)"

CLERIC, LOOK OUT!

PTING - TING - TING - TING

I DON'T KNOW WHERE WE ARE THIS TIME, BUT SOMEBODY'S NOT HAPPY TO SEE US!

PTWANG

PTWANG

LOOKS LIKE WE'VE LANDED IN THE MIDDLE OF A FULL-SCALE *WAR!*

WE'D BETTER FIND YOU SOME *COVER* WHILE WE FIGURE OUT WHAT'S GOING ON.

BWOOM

THAT... THAT'S AN *AMERICAN G.I.!*

WHAT'S THE SITUATION, SOLDIER?

NOT GOOD, SIR! ENEMY'S GOT ME PINNED DOWN... I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THE REST OF MY UNIT.

YES, I CAN SEE... THE ENEMY... ALL AROUND US.

YOU MUST HAVE GOOD EYES!

< HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN AT WAR, MY SON? >

SEEMS LIKE *FOREVER*. I'VE SEEN SO MANY MEN DIE... AND, GOD HELP ME, I KNOW I KILLED SOME OF 'EM.

I SAW MY OWN BROTHER *HARRY* FALL UNDER A THRESHER AND DIE... THOUGHT NOTHING COULD SHOCK ME AFTER THAT. BUT THAT WAS--

"-- BEFORE I SAW WAR." MY GOD, I KNOW *YOU*...

...YOU'RE *JONATHAN KENT!*

YES, SIR. DO I KNOW YOU?

PA, IT'S ME... I'M YOUR SON, CLARK!

MY... SON?

< THIS IS YOUR FATHER?! >

NO, THIS IS THE MAN WHO RAISED ME ON EARTH!

OH, PA... I'VE MISSED YOU AND MA SO!

AN' WE'VE MISSED YOU, SON...

PA?

NO, DON'T GO!

NO... NO... NO!!! I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN... NONE OF THIS IS REAL!

THOOM

PA... NEVER TALKED MUCH ABOUT THE WAR... HE SAID TOO MANY PEOPLE TRIED TO GLORIFY IT.

ALL I EVER KNEW OF IT WERE SOME OLD PICTURES AND A FEW STORIES... I HAD TO *IMAGINE* THE REST.

< YOU MUST LOVE YOUR... FATHER... A GREAT DEAL. >

HE'S THE FINEST MAN I KNOW...

"HE AND MA TAUGHT ME THAT PEOPLE HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES... THAT MY POWERS DIDN'T MAKE ME ANY BETTER THAN OTHER FOLKS..."

JONATHAN? WHAT ARE YOU DOING UP THERE?

PACKING, MARTHA! CLARK LEFT *MATRIX* IN OUR CARE...

...AND IT'S MAINLY *MY FAULT* THAT SHE CHANGED HERSELF INTO A *DOUBLE* OF OUR BOY. AS MIXED UP AS SHE--OR HE--IS, I'VE JUST GOTTA FIND HIM... *HER*...WHATEVER.

BUT WE DON'T KNOW WHERE SHE WENT!

RRRING

NO, BUT I SUSPECT SHE HEADED FOR *METROPOLIS!* IF I HURRY, I CAN CATCH THE NOON BUS TO WICHITA, AND FROM THERE--!

HELLO?

HELLO, PA.

CLARK? I MEAN, *MAT*--! UH... WHERE ARE YOU... SON?

I WANTED TO CALL AND TELL YOU NOT TO WORRY ABOUT ME. HOW IS MA?

SHE'S FINE-- BUT WHERE--?

I AM WITH FRIENDS. SAY HELLO TO LANA FOR ME! GOOD-BYE.

NOW JUST YOU *WAIT*--!

:CLICK:

HELLO? HELLO?!?

THANK YOU FOR LETTING ME USE YOUR PHONE, MR.--? CHIEF *PERRY-WHITE*?

THAT'S... RIGHT, KENT.

AND HE WAS LIKE THAT WHEN YOU FOUND HIM, OLSEN?

'FRAID SO, MR. WHITE.

KENT, WE WANT TO *HELP* YOU. CAN YOU REMEMBER *ANYTHING* OF WHAT HAPPENED AFTER YOU LEFT METROPOLIS?

LEFT--? BUT I AM RIGHT *HERE*.

CHIEF, WE'VE GOT TO--*CLARK!*

ARE YOU *ALL RIGHT?* WHEN WE TALKED ON THE PHONE, YOU DIDN'T QUITE SOUND LIKE YOURSELF!

THE PHONE? *YOU*... ARE *LOIS LANE*?

KENT'S SUFFERED SOME SORT OF *MEMORY LOSS*, LOIS. WE SUSPECT SOME CONNECTION WITH HIS EXPOSE OF *INTERGANG*.

WELL, HERE'S ANOTHER CONNECTION... *CATHERINE GRANT* WAS SUPPLYING CLARK WITH PROOF OF INTERGANG TIES TO MORGAN EDGE AT GALAXY COMMUNICATIONS.

WHAT?! *YOU* WERE KENT'S SOURCE?!?

I'M AFRAID SO.

GOLLY!

CAT, I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY. YOU PUT YOURSELF AT CONSIDERABLE *RISK*--!

I KNOW, PERRY... AND I *AM* SCARED! BUT THERE ARE TOO MANY MORGAN EDGES IN THE WORLD... I WANT TO SEE *THIS ONE* BEHIND BARS!

UNDERSTOOD. BUT WITH KENT IN HIS PRESENT STATE--!

SIR?

IT'S OKAY, SON... LOIS CAN FINISH YOUR SERIES.

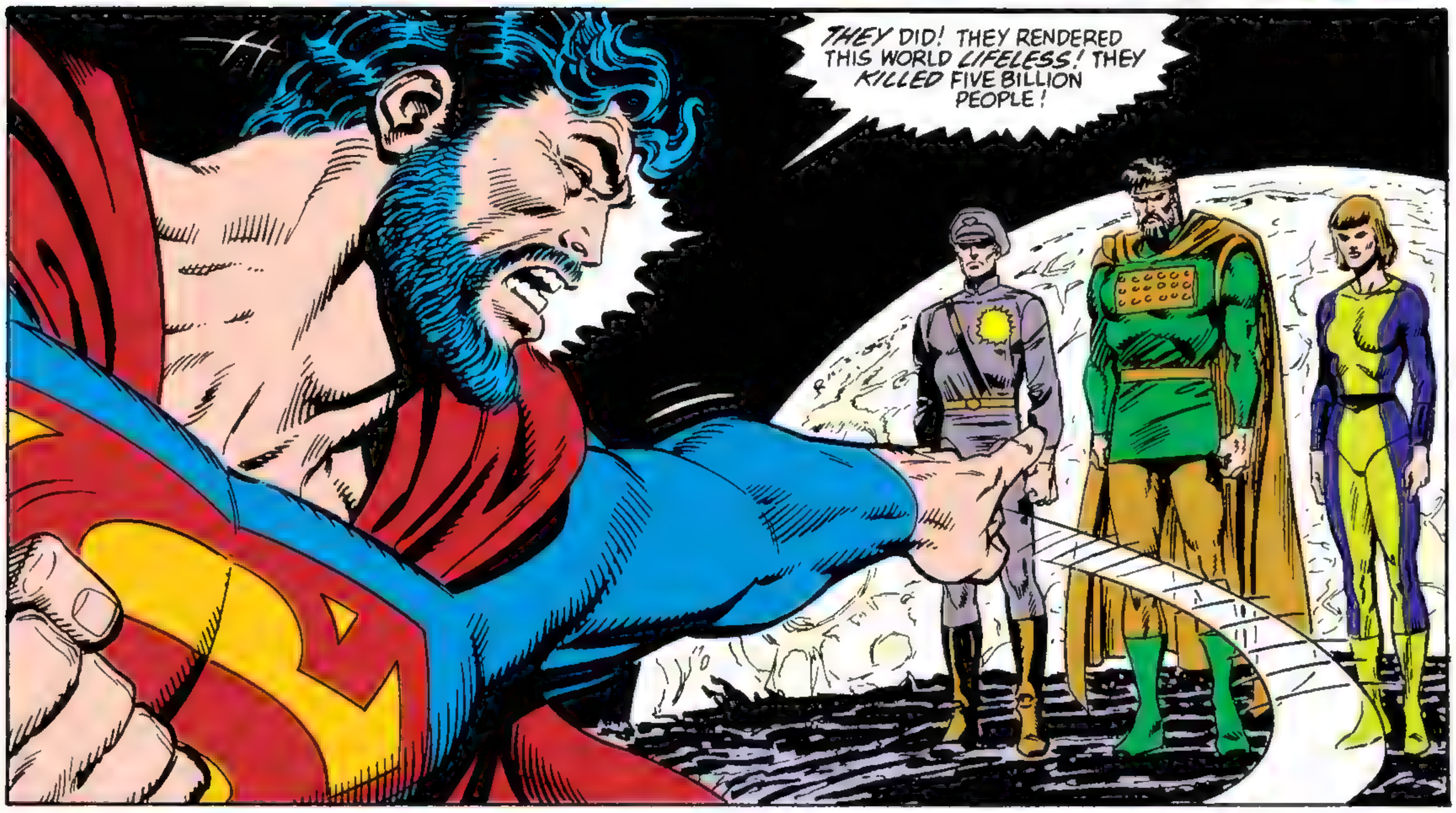
"< I DON'T LIKE THIS... >"

‹... I DON'T LIKE THIS AT ALL! WHATEVER IT IS THEY'RE EXPERIENCING IS TAKING A TERRIBLE TOLL ON THE CLERIC!›

‹SUPERMAN! THIS PSYCHIC VORTEX IS THE PRODUCT OF YOUR MIND! IT WILL TEAR US APART, IF YOU DO NOT...›

‹...PROVIDE ANOTHER FOCUS.›
I'M SORRY, CLERIC ...I WAS RESISTING ANY THOUGHTS OF THIS PLACE...

...BUT I NEVER CAN FOR LONG. IT ALWAYS COMES BACK TO THIS.
‹TELL ME ABOUT IT. WHAT HAPPENED TO THIS WORLD?›


THEY DID! THEY RENDERED THIS WORLD LIFELESS! THEY KILLED FIVE BILLION PEOPLE!

GENERAL ZOD, QUEX-UL, AND ZAORA... THREE SUPER-CRIMINALS WHOSE POWER RIVALED MY OWN... FROM A KRYPTON THAT NEVER SHOULD HAVE BEEN.

< I DO NOT UNDER-STAND. >

IT'S NOT EASY TO EXPLAIN.

A MONSTROUS COSMIC ENTITY CALLED THE *TIME TRAPPER* SOMEHOW STOLE A SPLIT-SECOND OF ETERNITY AND CREATED THIS *POCKET UNIVERSE*--

--A SKEWED REALITY, WHERE THESE THREE ESCAPED KRYPTON'S DOOM AND USED THEIR POWERS TO RENDER THIS *DUPLICATE EARTH* LIFELESS.

< THEN .. THEY AND THIS OTHER WORLD WERE NOT REAL? >

NO, CLERIC! THEY WERE *VERY REAL!* AND THEY WERE--

--GUILTY!

< EH? >

THE VERDICT IS SO RECORDED! THE SENTENCE SHALL BE--

--DEATH!!

THERE WAS A CERTAIN *ELEMENT* IN THIS REALITY WHICH REMOVED THE CRIMINALS' POWERS, AND ANOTHER WHOSE RADIATIONS WERE *FATAL*... TO THEM ALONE. I USED *BOTH* SUBSTANCES ON THEM.

I ACTED AS JUDGE, JURY, AND EXECUTIONER. SINCE THAT MOMENT, I HAVE KNOWN LITTLE PEACE.

<THERE WERE NO ALTERNATIVES?>

ALTERNATIVES? YES... A FEW...

...I COULD HAVE SIMPLY LEFT THEM, *POWERLESS*, ON THIS DEAD WORLD... TO DIE OF *ASPHYXIATION*--

--OR I COULD HAVE BROUGHT THEM BACK TO OUR REALITY WITH ME. BUT *THEN* WHAT?

ZOD HAD BOASTED THAT THEY'D FIND A WAY TO GET THEIR POWERS BACK. IF THEY'D EVER MADE GOOD ON THAT THREAT, NO FORCE ON EARTH COULD'VE STOPPED THEM!

POCKET UNIVERSE? UH... THAT'S OUTTA OUR JURISDICTION, SUPERMAN.

YOU SEE? I COULDN'T RISK TRANSPORTING SUCH DANGEROUS CREATURES TO ANY OTHER WORLD, BUT I COULDN'T JUST *LEAVE* THEM THERE!

I WAS THE ONLY FORCE FOR *JUSTICE* LEFT IN THAT SAD REALITY.

THEY HAD KILLED AN *ENTIRE WORLD*-- I *COULDN'T* LET SUCH A CRIME GO UNPUNISHED.

NO! NO!!

I *HATE* WHAT I DID THAT DAY... BUT NOTHING IN MY POWER CAN ERASE IT.

I BURIED THEM HERE, AMID THE DESOLATION THEY'D CREATED...

...BUT I'LL *NEVER* BURY MY SHAME. IT WAS THE FIRST TIME I HAD KILLED OTHER LIVING BEINGS.

I SWEAR IT WILL BE THE ***LAST!***

< I UNDERSTAND, MY SON. I, TOO, HAD THE LIVES OF OTHERS ON MY CONSCIENCE... I, TOO, WENT INTO EXILE. >

< BUT YOUR EXILE HAS DEPRIVED YOUR WORLD OF A GREAT HERO, YOUR FAMILY OF A LOVING SON. >

I END YOUR EXILE... CLAIM THE LEGACY THAT IS RIGHTFULLY YOURS, AND FULFILL BOTH OUR DESTINIES.
AFTER ALL YOU'VE SEEN, ALL YOU NOW KNOW OF ME... YOU STILL WANT ME TO HAVE IT?
I MY SON, I HAVE LOOKED INTO YOUR SOUL. YOURS IS THE HEART OF A TRUE HERO... IF YOU HAVE SINNED, IT WAS IN THE CAUSE OF JUSTICE.
CLERIC, I BELIEVE THAT LIFE IS A PRECIOUS GIFT--!
I THEN DO NOT SEEK TO ESCAPE FROM IT, AS I DID... EMBRACE IT!
I PROVE YOURSELF WORTHY OF BEING SUPERMAN BY LIVING AND WORKING FOR THE PRESERVATION OF LIFE.
I...
I YOU ARE THE SOLE SURVIVOR OF KRYPTON...
I ...YOU AND THIS ARTIFACT ARE ALL THAT REMAIN OF THAT WORLD.
I HAVE GUARDED IT FOR 200 MILLENNIA TAKE IT...
I ...LEARN FROM IT. AS LONG AS YOU ENDURE...

"<... KRYPTON LIVES ON!>"

<SUPERMAN! THE CLERIC...>

<... H-HE REMOVED HIS HANDS FROM THE ERADICATOR, AND JUST COLLAPSED.>

<HE HAS AGED SO!

GOOD LORD!

CLERIC, TAKE BACK THE ERADICATOR! 'F IT CAN KEEP YOU ALIVE--!

<NO, IT HAS BEEN PASSED ON. IT WILL WORK FOR ME NO MORE.>

IT *MUST!* I DON'T WANT YOUR LIFE ON MY CONSCIENCE, TOO!

<DO NOT THINK IT SO. I HAVE LIVED A LONG LIFE... I HAVE SEEN MY DESTINY FULFILLED.>

<BUT THERE IS ONE THING MORE I WISH TO SEE.>

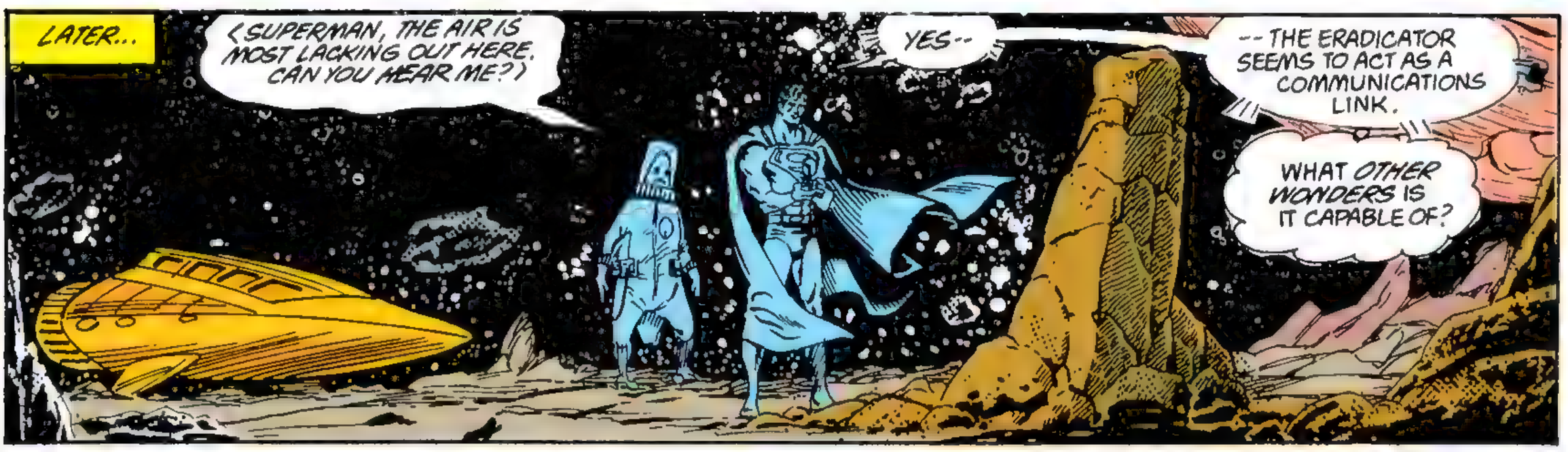
<THE BASE OF THE ERADICATOR CAN BE ADJUSTED... IT SHOULD ALLOW FOR THE PROPER REFLECTION OF YOUR HEAT VISION... DO YOU UNDERSTAND?>

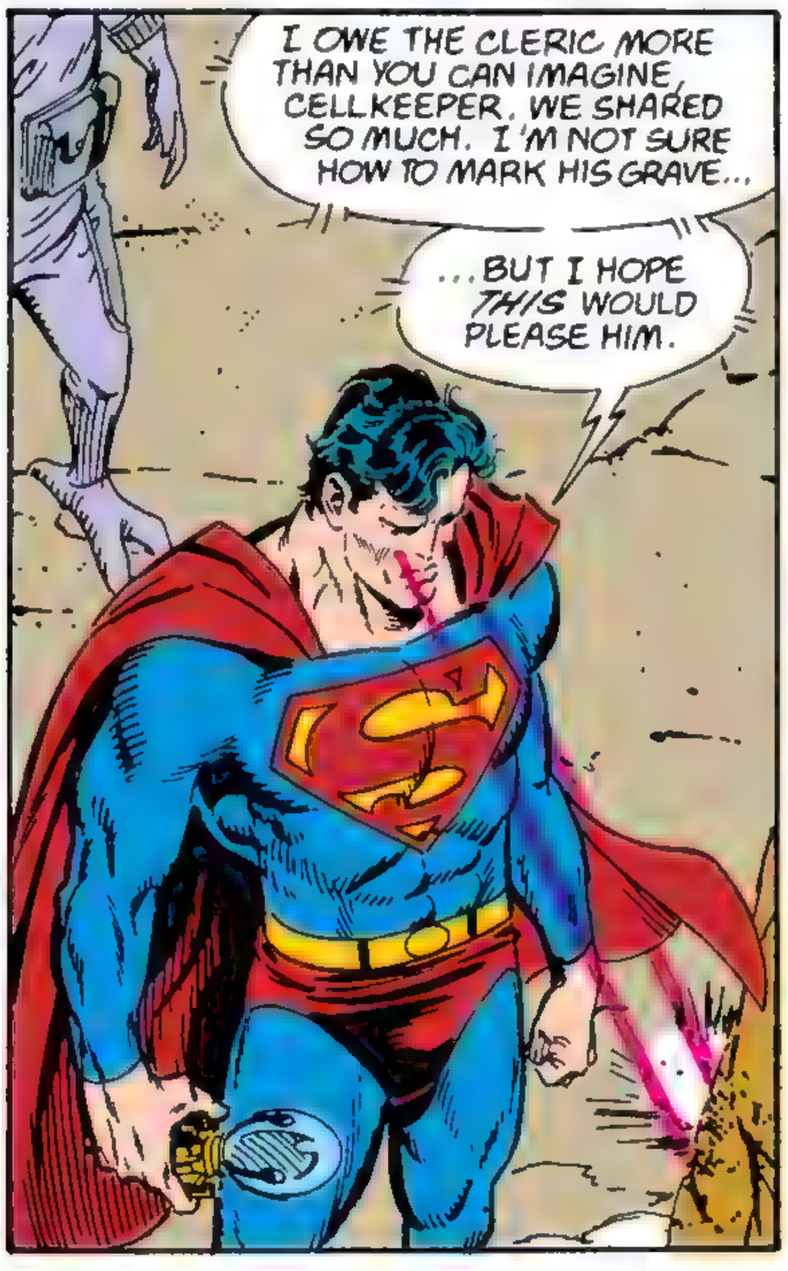
I DO.

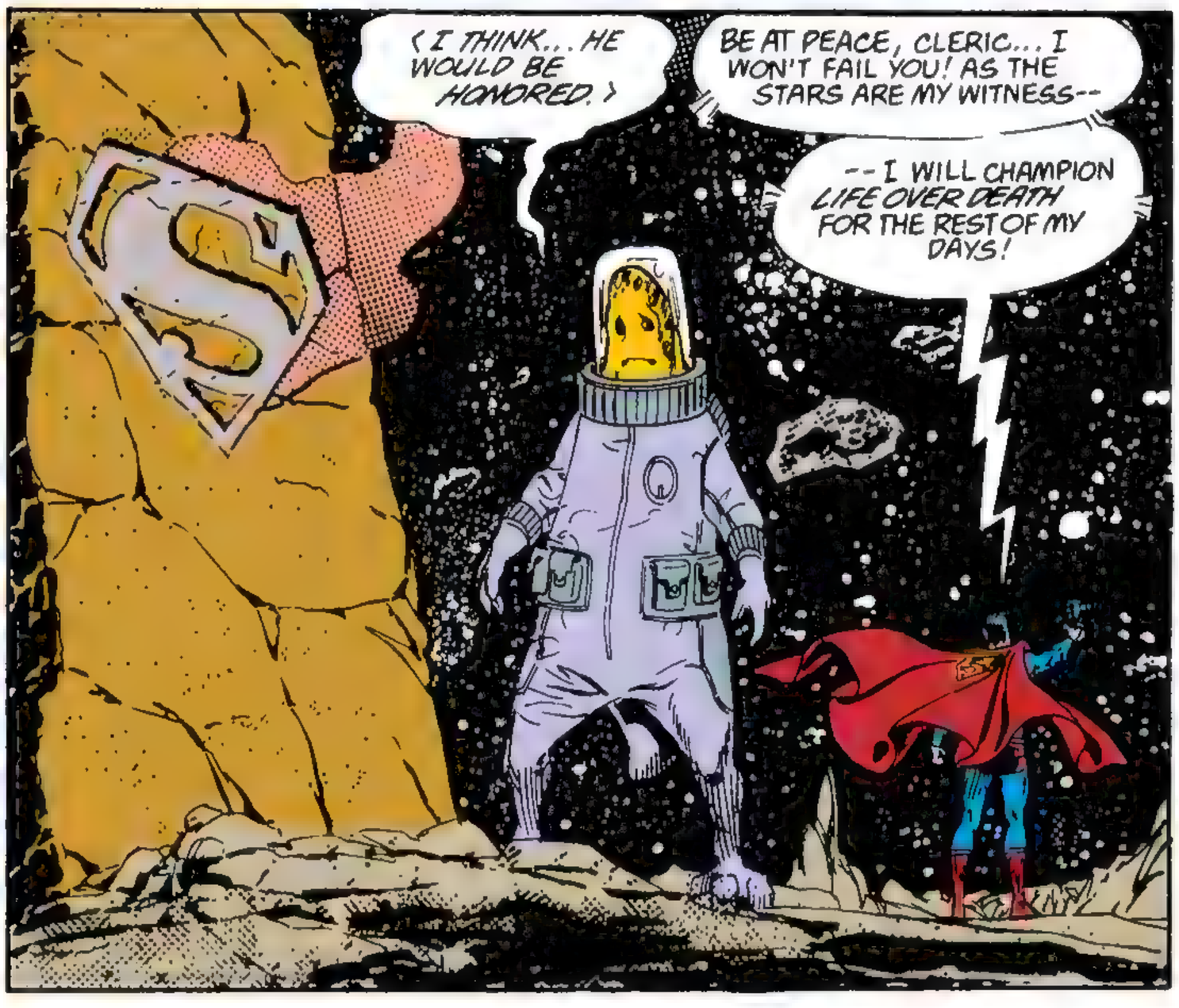
I FEEL A LITTLE *ODD*, THOUGH...

...USING THE LEGACY OF KRYPTON FOR SOMETHING AS MUNDANE AS *SHAVING!*

〈HEH-HEH. I THINK IT A MOST APPROPRIATE USE. HAS IT NOT ALLOWED ME TO BEHOLD THE FACE OF A HERO?〉
〈YES, IT HAS HELPED REVEAL YOUR FEATURES, EVEN AS IT RESTORED YOUR ATTIRE.〉
YOU'LL FIND THAT CAPE SOMEWHAT STURDIER THAN THE LAST ONE.〉


LATER...
〈SUPERMAN, THE AIR IS MOST LACKING OUT HERE. CAN YOU HEAR ME?〉
YES--
--THE ERADICATOR SEEMS TO ACT AS A COMMUNICATIONS LINK.
WHAT OTHER WONDERS IS IT CAPABLE OF?


I OWE THE CLERIC MORE THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE, CELLKEEPER. WE SHARED SO MUCH. I'M NOT SURE HOW TO MARK HIS GRAVE...
...BUT I HOPE THIS WOULD PLEASE HIM.


〈I THINK... HE WOULD BE HONORED.〉
BE AT PEACE, CLERIC... I WON'T FAIL YOU! AS THE STARS ARE MY WITNESS--
--I WILL CHAMPION LIFE OVER DEATH FOR THE REST OF MY DAYS!

"REDEMPTION" CONTINUES NEXT WEEK IN ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN #456
AND, IN TWO WEEKS, ACTION COMICS RETURNS with SUPERMAN on EARTH!

REDEMPTION!

FOR OVER 200,000 YEARS THE CLERIC LIVED WITH KRYPTON'S ANCIENT SECRETS AND STORIES, WAITING--ALMOST IN VAIN--TO PASS THEM ALONG.

NOW HE IS GONE, AND THE INHERITOR OF HIS LEGACY, THE LAST SON OF KRYPTON, CAN ONLY GRIEVE FOR THE BEING WHO GAVE HIM NEW-FOUND LIFE.

BE AT PEACE, CLERIC... I WON'T FAIL YOU! AS THE STARS ARE MY WITNESS--

-- I WILL CHAMPION *LIFE OVER DEATH* FOR THE REST OF MY DAYS!

<UH... YOU OKAY, SUPERMAN?>

PLOT: *JERRY ORDWAY* * WORDS AND PICTURES: *DAN JURGENS*
FINISHES: *ART THIBERT* * LETTERS: *ALBERT DE GUZMAN*
COLORS: *GLENN WHITMORE* * ASSOC. EDITS: *JONATHAN PETERSON*
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STRANGE.

I KNEW YOU, CLERIC, FOR SUCH A SHORT TIME... YET THERE IS AN UNDENIABLE BOND BETWEEN *US*.

A *FRIENDSHIP* OF KINDRED SPIRITS.

YOU WERE A PROPHET, CLERIC... A SAVIOR OF KRYPTON'S CONSCIENCE...

...AND A SAVIOR OF MINE AS WELL.

FOR YEARS THE DESOLATE, BARREN ASTEROID SERVED AS YOUR PRISON...

...NOW AS YOUR INADEQUATE GRAVE.

YOUR GIFT TO THE UNIVERSE WAS TRUTH AND CLARITY.

NO MAN COULD DO MORE.

MAY YOUR SPIRIT SOAR THE COSMOS IN PEACE AND SERENITY.

<SUPERMAN?>

<WHAT NOW?>

HOME, CELLKEEPER, IT'S FINALLY TIME FOR ME TO GO *HOME*.

<HOW? I'D GLADLY ASSIST, BUT MY SMALL SHIP IS UNABLE TO TRAVEL SO FAR!>

DO YOU HAVE ACCESS TO A TELEPORTER?

<UNFORTUNATELY, NO! EVEN THE *WARWORLD'S* CANNOT... WAIT!>

<WHAT ABOUT THE *ERADICATOR*?>

<YOU STUDIED ITS POWER WITH THE CLERIC... SAW ITS ALMOST *INFINITE* CAPABILITIES!>

CAPABLE ENOUGH TO RETURN ME TO EARTH?

THIS ERADICATOR... THIS MYSTERIOUS RELIC OF ANCIENT KRYPTON... WAS CONCEIVED AS A WEAPON-- BUT IT HAS BECOME MORE!

MUCH *MORE*!

IF VISUALIZATION IS THE *KEY* TO ITS POWER AND CONCENTRATION THE *TRIGGER*...

...THEN THOUGHTS OF EARTH...

...IMAGES OF METROPOLIS... FRIENDS...

...PARENTS...

...HOME...

<FAREWELL, SUPERMAN.>

I TELL YOU, MORGAN, I AM NOT AT ALL HAPPY WITH WHAT I'M SEEING HERE!

YOUR WEIGHT IS UP, YOUR CHOLESTEROL IS UP, YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE IS UP--

AND YOUR *TIME* IS *UP*!

I'M PAYING FOR A DOCTOR, NOT A *NANNY*!

BESIDES, I'M IN TIP-TOP SHAPE! NO SLIGHT CASE OF NERVES CAN BRING DOWN MORGAN EDGE!

MORGAN, THAT POMPOUS ATTITUDE OF YOURS WILL BE THE *DEATH* OF YOU YET! YOUR HEALTH--

IS PEACHY, JOHN! NOW TAKE FIVE, I'VE GOT AN IMPORTANT CALL!

LISTEN TO ME MORGAN! IF YOU DON'T--

DON'T YOU HEAR WELL, DOC? GET *OUTTA* HERE!

IF YOU WEREN'T AN OLD FRAT BUDDY...

QUIT CRYIN' AND SEND ME A BILL!

WHAT'S THE GOOD WORD, MANNHEIM?

TROUBLE, EDGE! MY SOURCES INSIDE THE PLANET TELL ME ANOTHER EXPOSÉ IS RUNNING TOMORROW-- PAGE ONE.

BLAST THAT INTERFERING KENT!

IT AIN'T KENT WHO WROTE THE ARTICLE... IT WAS THAT LOIS LANE BROAD!

LANE? THAT TEARS IT! ENOUGH IS *ENOUGH*! IT'S TIME WE DEALT WITH THESE *PAINS* ONCE AND FOR ALL!

DON'T SWEAT IT, EDGE! *TURMOIL* WILL BE ARRIVIN' IN METROPOLIS SOON! AND ONCE HE DOES...

...THERE WON'T BE ENOUGH LEFT OF THAT FOOL KENT TO PUT ON A POSTAGE STAMP!

GOOD! BUT I NEED ALL OF OUR PROBLEMS TAKEN CARE OF!

EDGE OUT!

THIS *INTERGANG* EXPOSÉ HAS GONE TOO FAR... TOO *DEEP!* UNLESS I DISCOVER KENT'S INSIDER SOON MY NERVES WILL EAT ME ALIVE!

MISS CONWAY, SEND THAT OBTUSE QUACK BACK IN HERE PRONTO!

GOOD TO SEE YOU'VE COME TO YOUR SENSES, MORGAN! IF YOU CONTINUE--

SAVE THE TWO-BIT LECTURE AND GIVE ME SOMETHING TO CALM ME DOWN! MY NERVES ARE SHOT!

YOUR NERVES ARE SHOT BECAUSE YOU DON'T TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF!

YOU HAVEN'T LISTENED TO ME YET, EDGE, BUT AS OF TODAY YOU'RE DARN WELL *GOING* TO!

HEY!

FROM NOW ON YOU WILL *NOT* DRINK OR SMOKE! YOU *WILL* EXERCISE BECAUSE IF YOU DON'T YOU'RE GOING TO SUFFER A DEBILITATING--

OKAY, OKAY! FROM NOW ON I'LL LIVE SUCH A CLEAN LIFE THE POPE WILL LOOK LIKE A PARTY ANIMAL BY COMPARISON!

BUT--

OUT, DOC!

BLAST IT, MANNHEIM, THIS BETTER BE IMPORTANT! I HAVEN'T THE TIME FOR YOUR TRIVIAL INTERRUPTIONS!

ONE WOULD HOPE, EDGE...

A.T.

...THAT YOU HAVE ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD FOR ME!

D-D-DARKSEID! MY HUMBLEST APOLOGIES, MY LIEGE! HAD I KNOWN IT WAS YOU--

BE SILENT, WORM!

BE AWARE THAT TURMOIL IS ABOUT TO ARRIVE! ONCE HE DOES YOUR INEPTITUDE IN DEALING WITH THE KENT MATTER WILL BE ERASED!

UMM... THE PROBLEM HAS... INFLATED SINCE THEN. ANOTHER REPORTER, LOIS LANE, IS NOW WORKING ON THE INTERGANG STORY AS WELL!

YOU WHINE LIKE ONE OF NEW GENESIS' WHELPS, EDGE!

THE SOLUTION IS OBVIOUS--LET TURMOIL DEAL WITH LANE!

YES...

...YES!

AS YOU WISH, OH, MIGHTY DARKSEID!

THEN WITNESS THE POWER OF AN APOKOLIPTIAN BOOM TUBE...

...AND THROUGH A SOPHISTICATED COMMUNICATIONS LINK...

...THE DREADED ARRIVAL OF THE RAMPAGING TURMOIL!

AILY

I'VE SEEN ONE HECK OF A LOT DURING MY YEARS ON THE BEAT, LADIES!

A LOT OF SHOCKS, A LOT OF SURPRISES!

BUT I DON'T THINK I'VE BEEN THIS STUNNED SINCE WE A-BOMBED JAPAN IN '45!

AN EDITOR LIKES TO THINK HE KNOWS WHAT HIS REPORTERS ARE UP TO!

SO YOU CAN IMAGINE HOW ASTONISHED I WAS...

SOME MAY CRITICIZE HER METHODS, BUT HER EFFORTS WILL HELP BRING DOWN MORGAN EDGE AND INTERGANG!

SHE DESERVES CO-CREDIT ON MY BY-LINE!

UNO MOMENTO, LOIS!

...TO DISCOVER THAT IT WAS CAT GRANT WHO WAS FEEDING KENT THE SCOOP ON *INTERGANG!*

THAT MAKES TWO OF US, PERRY. AND SHE DID A VERY FINE JOB!

I DON'T *CARE* ABOUT THE CREDIT! I ONLY DID THIS TO PROVE TO YOU BOTH THAT I COULD ACTUALLY *BE* A GOOD REPORTER!

AND MOST OF ALL, TO JUSTIFY CLARK'S CONTINUAL BELIEF IN ME AND MY ABILITIES.

UH... YOU BETTER HANG AROUND AND TALK TO THE PLANET LAWYERS, CAT. WE'RE EXPECTING EDGE TO SUE.

IF AND WHEN HE DOES, YOUR TESTIMONY WILL BE DOWN RIGHT *ESSENTIAL!*

AND IF EDGE AND INTERGANG ARE AS MANIACAL AS THEY SEEM, YOU COULD BE IN SERIOUS DANGER!

LOIS IS RIGHT! I WANT YOU BOTH TO STAY AT THE PLANET UNTIL THINGS DIE DOWN!

SPEAKING OF WHICH, WHERE'S CLARK?

HE LEFT TO PICK UP OUR LUNCHES HOURS AGO!

WHOA... CALM DOWN, YOU WORRY WARTS, THE STORY HASN'T EVEN RUN YET-- LIGHTEN UP!

I'M GOING TO HEAD HOME AND PICK UP ENOUGH CLOTHES TO LAST THE DURATION!

CIAO!

CAT, WAIT!

DON'T BE SILLY, PERRY, I'LL BE FINE! AND IF I RUN ACCROSS THAT TALL, DARK AND WANDERING REPORTER OF YOURS I'LL SEND HIM BACK!

WATCH YOURSELF, LADY! AND GET BACK HERE *DOUBLE QUICK!*

NICE TO KNOW YOU CARE, PERRY.

THIS WHOLE MESS STINKS, LOIS! KENT'S BEEN GONE TOO LONG--SOMETHING'S WRONG!

I'D LIKE TO WAIT, BUT I HAVE TO MEET JOSE AT PROFESSOR HAMILTON'S IN FIFTEEN MINUTES!

JUST WORRY ABOUT THE OTHER TWO--YOU *KNOW* I'M QUITE CAPABLE OF TAKING CARE OF MYSELF!

SEE YOU LATER, CHIEF!

HUMMPH!

LAND SAKES, MA, I'VE KNOWN YOU ALL MY LIFE AND CAN TELL PRETTY EASY WHEN SOMETHING'S GNAWING AT YOU!

IT'S *MATRIX* ISN'T IT?

KENT

U.S. MAIL

GOODNESS KNOWS I CAN'T GET HER OUT OF MY MIND! CLARK ASKED US TO CARE FOR HER AND NOW...

YUP, WE LET OUR BOY DOWN!

MAE WAS SO SWEET, SO WILLING TO PLEASE US THAT SHE WENT THROUGH A LOT OF PAIN TO ACTUALLY *BECOME* CLARK!

AND THEN TO SNEAK OFF TO METROPOLIS THE WAY SHE DID...

OH, I PRAY SHE'S WELL. SHE MAY LOOK AND SOUND LIKE CLARK BUT SHE HAS A *CHILD'S* MIND!

SO FAR SHE'S BEEN PLAIN *LUCKY!*

TRUE. SHE SURE ENOUGH HELPED COVER CLARK'S DISAPPEARANCE WHEN EVERYONE THOUGHT HE'D BEEN MURDERED!

GRACIOUS, JONATHAN, AT LEAST SHE HAS CLARK'S FRIENDS MINDING HER WELL-BEING!

KENT

BUT WHO'S LOOKING OUT FOR OUR BOY?

BEEN GONE SO LONG NOW... IF ONLY WE COULD HEAR FROM HIM SOMEHOW...

...THE UNCERTAINTY OF IT ALL... THE NOT KNOWING...

NOW, MARTHA, YOU JUST STOP THAT *FRETTING*! REMEMBER WHEN HE WAS SIX AND HE AND LANA GOT LOST OVER IN THE ALFALFA FIELDS?

I FUSSED AND CRIED SO...

FOR NOTHING... WE FOUND 'EM HOURS LATER PLAYING THERE WITHOUT A CARE IN THE WORLD!

I JUST PRAY THAT'S THE CASE IN WHATEVER STRANGE PLACE HE'S IN THIS TIME, TOO.

THIS METROPOLIS IS CERTAINLY A STRANGE LAND.

BIG BELLY BURGER

THAT GIRL WITH THE FUNNY HAT TRADED ME ALL THIS FOOD...

...FOR MY GREEN PAPERS!

MA KENT NEVER FED ME THIS MUCH AT HOME.

BIG BELLY BURGER

BIG BELLY FRIES

BELLY BELLY GOOD!

BIG BELLY FRIES

THAT NICE PERRY WHITE GAVE ME A LIST WITH ALL THIS ON IT AND THE VALUED PAPERS, TOO!

IT IS ALL VERY, VERY CONFUSING TO MATRIX...

...BUT SINCE IT IS TRULY BELLY, BELLY GOOD I SHALL PLEASE MR. WHITE AND EAT IT ALL!

I WILL EVEN CLEAN UP AFTER MYSELF, JUST AS MA TAUGHT ME!

THIS BEAUTIFUL PARK MUST--

--WHY IS THE GROUND SHAKING? HEY--!

MY GOD-- IT'S AN EARTH-QUAKE!

EARTH--? WOW! WHAT IS THAT?

IT MOVES WITH A CAT-LIKE GRACE AND QUICKNESS THAT BELIES ITS SIZE AND CONSTRUCTION.

THOUSANDS OF PNEUMATIC AND HYDRAULIC PUMPS EMIT ONLY THE QUIETEST MECHANICAL HISS.

ITS NAME IS TURMOIL...

...FOR NO OTHER NAME CAN DO THIS ENGINE OF DESTRUCTION JUSTICE!

GOLLY, I NEVER SAW ANYTHING LIKE YOU IN SMALLVILLE!

TURMOIL'S OPTIC SYSTEMS ARE TRANSMITTING *PERFECTLY*, DARKSEID!

AND THAT IDIOT KENT IS ACTING LIKE A FARM-BOY WHO'S JUST SEEN HIS FIRST SKYSCRAPER!

WHY DOESN'T HE FLEE IN--WAIT! SOMEONE'S COMING!

CLARK, DON'T JUST STAND THERE, *RUN*! IT'S GOING TO *KILL* YOU!

KILL ME? WHY NEVER WOULD--

NO!

THE LEAK... KENT'S SECRET SOURCE...IT WAS THAT TREACHEROUS, LYING, WITCH CAT GRANT ALL ALONG!

KILL HER TOO, DARKSEID!

I DEMAND YOU KILL *THEM BOTH*!

NO MAN MAKES DEMANDS OF DARKSEID, EDGE. AND TO TEACH YOU THUS, CAT GRANT WILL LIVE!

"BUT CLARK KENT SHALL INDEED DIE UNDER THE GLORIOUS BANNER OF DARKSEID TODAY!"

"PREPARE THERMAL BLASTERS!

"FIRE!"

KLAKOWW

CLARK!

"YOU DID IT, DARKSEID! KENT IS DEAD!"

"CAREFUL, EDGE. ONLY AFTER TURMOIL'S SENSORS SCAN THE RUBBLE CAN WE BE CERTAIN."

NO SIGNS OF HUMAN LIFE-- HE'S WORM FOOD NOW!

HOW... ELOQUENT. PROCEED TO LANE'S.

OH, MY--!

...CLARK?

CLARK!

HEY, WOW! LIKE, ARE YOU OKAY?

C'MON, LADY, YOUR FRIEND'S A GONER! LET ME HELP YOU!

IT'S MY FAULT...

LIKE, WHAT *WAS* THAT BIG THING ANYWAY?

IF HE HADN'T DONE THAT STUPID STORY-- TO HELP *ME* OUT --HE--

HOLY--! LOOK! I *GOTTA* BE SEEING THINGS!

PLEASE DO NOT CRY, CAT! I AM QUITE FINE!

C-CLARK? I-- THAT ROBOT BLASTED YOU THROUGH A *CONCRETE* WALL AT POINT BLANK RANGE!

WHY ARE'NT YOU DE-- *HURT*?

I AM VERY *TOUGH*! I KNOW, BECAUSE BIBBO TOLD ME SO!

LOOK, YOU'RE SHAKY... CONFUSED. WE SHOULD PROBABLY GET YOU TO A HOSPITAL!

WHY? IS THERE SOMEONE THERE I SHOULD SEE?

HOLD IT, CLARK -- THE WAY THAT THING JUST TURNED TAIL AND MARCHED OFF --WHAT IF IT'S AFTER SOMEONE ELSE NOW?

HOLD *WHAT*, CAT GRANT?

OF COURSE! I'D BET EVERY BIT OF JEWELRY I OWN THAT THIS ATTACK WAS *INTERGANG* RELATED! AND IF SO, *LOIS* COULD BE THE NEXT MARK!

LOIS? THEN I MUST GET CLEAN CLOTHES.

WHAT? :TSK: OKAY, AFTER WE MAKE A CALL...

I KNOW IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE, JOSE, BUT YOUR CONNECTION TO LEX LUTHOR MAY FINALLY DO SOME GOOD!

FOR UNLESS I'M *NOT* THE INVENTOR S.T.A.R. LABS PAYS ME TO BE--

--THIS NEW HELMET SHOULD GIVE YOU *COMPLETE* CYBERNETIC CONTROL OVER THAT ARMOR LEXCORP CREATED.

GANGBUSTER CAN GUARD THE STREETS OF METROPOLIS ONCE AGAIN!

YOU SAY THAT LIKE I SHOULD BE CELEBRATING, PROFESSOR.

BRRING

HAMILTON HERE.

OH, YES, MS. GRANT, OF COURSE I REMEMBER YOU!

NO, I'M AFRAID LOIS HASN'T ARRIVED YET! CARE TO LEAVE A MESSAGE?

LOOK, PROFESSOR, I'LL MAKE THIS QUICK!

INTERGANG JUST TRIED TO KNOCK OFF CLARK KENT WITH SOME WHACKO ROBOT AS BIG AS A HOUSE!

AND WHEN IT LEFT IT WAS HEADED IN YOUR DIRECTION-- I'M AFRAID IT'S AFTER LOIS!

THUNDERATION!

JOSE-- CATHERINE GRANT THINKS LOIS IS IN DANGER!

I'M AFRAID THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND OUT FOR SURE, PROFESSOR...

AND WITH SUPERMAN STILL OUT OF TOWN--

--I GUESS IT'S UP TO *GANGBUSTER* TO DO THE HONORS!

WHETHER I LIKE IT OR NOT...

THAT'LL BE SIX-FIFTY, LADY. LESS, OF COURSE, YER IN A GENEROUS MOOD--IN WHICH CASE, A HEFTY GRATUITY WOULD BE GRACIOUSLY ACCEPTED.

TAXI

MY, MY TACTFUL SORT AREN'T YOU? IF YOU DROVE AS GOOD AS YOU--HUH?

WOOEEE! NOW, IS THIS A STORY FALLING SMACK-DAB IN MY LAP OR WHAT?

650

"IT'S HER, DARKSEID! IT'S LOIS LANE!"

"MUST YOU CONSTANTLY STATE THE OBVIOUS, EDGE? TURMOIL WILL DEAL WITH HER!"

UH, OH--THIS IS MORE THAN JUST A STORY...

...THIS IS BIG TROUBLE!

CLEAR OUT, BUDDY!

NOW!

SKRRRUNCHH

HEAD FOR COVER, LOIS! I'LL DIVERT ITS ATTENTION ELSEWHERE!

JOSE?!

NO! JOSE! REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED THE LAST TIME!

MY CAB!

WHO'S GONNA PAY FER MY CAB?

HOW COULD I FORGET? A FEW MONTHS BACK WHEN I TRIED THE HERO-ROUTINE TO SAVE LOIS--

--I ENDED UP ALMOST DEAD AND NEARLY COMPLETELY *PARALYZED!* *

"WHO IS THIS INTERVENING FOOL, EDGE?"

* ADVENTURES #437.

"HE'S JUST ANOTHER VIGILANTE, DARKSEID... CALLS HIMSELF GANGBUSTER!"

"CALLED HIMSELF GANGBUSTER, YOU MEAN!"

OH, GOD--PLEASE LET JOSE'S NEW ARMOR PROTECT HIM *THIS TIME!*

I COULDN'T BEAR HAVING HIM HURT *AGAIN* BECAUSE OF *ME!*

THAT THING *IS* AFTER ME FOR SOME REASON.

MAYBE I CAN DRAW IT OUT TOWARD THE WATERFRONT--AND AWAY FROM JOSE--WHERE IT CAN DO LESS DAMAGE!

DARKSEID, SHE'S GETTING AWAY!

"NO, EDGE, NO ONE ESCAPES TURMOIL!"

SKUNCH

STUFF

IT'S WORKING--IT'S FOLLOWING ME!

BUT *NOW* WHAT?

YEEOW! THE PROFESSOR WAS RIGHT...

LUTHOR'S SUIT ACTUALLY DID ME SOME GOOD! IT KEPT ME *ALIVE!*

NOW I'VE GOT TO TRY AND DO THE SAME FOR LOIS!

AND IF IT'S TRUE THAT THE BIGGER FALL HARDER...

...THEN A FEW SHOTS TO THE LEGS OUGHT TO PUT THIS GUY OUT OF COMMISSION!

MAN! I'M CONCENTRATING ALL THE ARMOR'S JUICE ON THE *GUN-BARRELS* AND THEY STILL CAN'T BE DENTED!

BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN THEY CAN'T BE PUT TO GOOD USE!

IF I STICK CLOSE TO IT THERE'S NO WAY IT CAN BLAST ME WITHOUT WASTING ITSELF!

SO, IF I CAN FORCE THE ANGLE ON ONE OF THESE PEA SHOOTERS JUST RIGHT...

BLAKAMM

BINGO!

PLEASE, JOSE, LET IT GO! YOU'RE GOING TO GET KILLED! I'M THE ONE IT WANTS!

I KNOW THE FEELING... BUT I CAN'T GIVE YOU UP WITHOUT A FIGHT!

I EXPECTED THOSE ROUNDS TO SKRAG IT, AND ALL THEY DID WAS PRY OPEN THIS PANEL!

STILL, WITH ITS GUTS EXPOSED...

...I MIGHT BE ABLE TO THROW A MONKEY WRENCH INTO ITS WORKS!

:UNGH: WON'T BUDGE--! WHO THE HECK PUT THIS THING TOGETHER?

SKAKK

PARK

ARRRGH! ELECTRIFIED-- ITS WHOLE BODY--CAN'T--

JOSE!

THE ASSAULT DOESN'T LET UP AS TURMOIL MERCILESSLY POUNDS AWAY ON THE UNCONSCIOUS GANGBUSTER.

SHAKKA SHAKKA

BORN IN THE BLAZING FIRES OF DARKSEID'S APOKOLIPS, TURMOIL WAS CREATED TO BE THE SUPREME AGENT OF DESTRUCTION.

IT'S RELENTLESS IN ITS ATTACK... RUTHLESS IN ITS MISSION.

JOSE... NO...

...NOT AGAIN!

IT CAME TO EXTINGUISH LOIS LANE--

SKOOM

--AND NOTHING SHORT OF A SUPER-MAN COULD HAVE KEPT IT FROM ITS MISSION.

KRAKOOOM

UNFORTUNATELY GANGBUSTER IS NOT A SUPER-MAN--AND TURMOIL'S MISSION WILL SOON BE COMPLETE.

BACK OFF, MR. MACHINE!

VREEETT

ONE WAY OR ANOTHER YOU'LL UNDERSTAND THAT WHEN MARGARET SAWYER TELLS YOU TO BACK OFF--

--YOU BACK OFF!

OR YOU END UP LOOKING LIKE A CRUSHED BEER CAN!

SAWYER-- THANK GOD! PLEASE BE CAREFUL, THOUGH... I THINK GANGBUSTER IS BADLY INJURED!

CHOOOM

CAP'N SAWYER... LOOK OUT!

THAT SCRAP HEAP'S GETTIN' READY TO BLAST US ALL!

REYNOLDS, NO! YOU'RE GONNA BRING THAT TON O' TIN DOWN--

--RIGHT ON TOP OF US!

HOLY--! DARKSEID... I JUST WANTED KENT AND LANE HIT *QUIETLY!*

YOU'RE KILLING *COPS!* TOTALLING THE *WHOLE CITY!*

STOP SNIVELLING AND ACT LIKE A MAN, EDGE! WE'RE GOING TO GET TURMOIL OUT OF THAT RUBBLE--AND IF ALL METROPOLIS SHOULD FALL IN THE PROCESS--

"--IT IS NO CONCERN OF DARKSEID'S!"

N-NEVER... SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS...

...THE DESTRUCTION...

SUPERMAN...

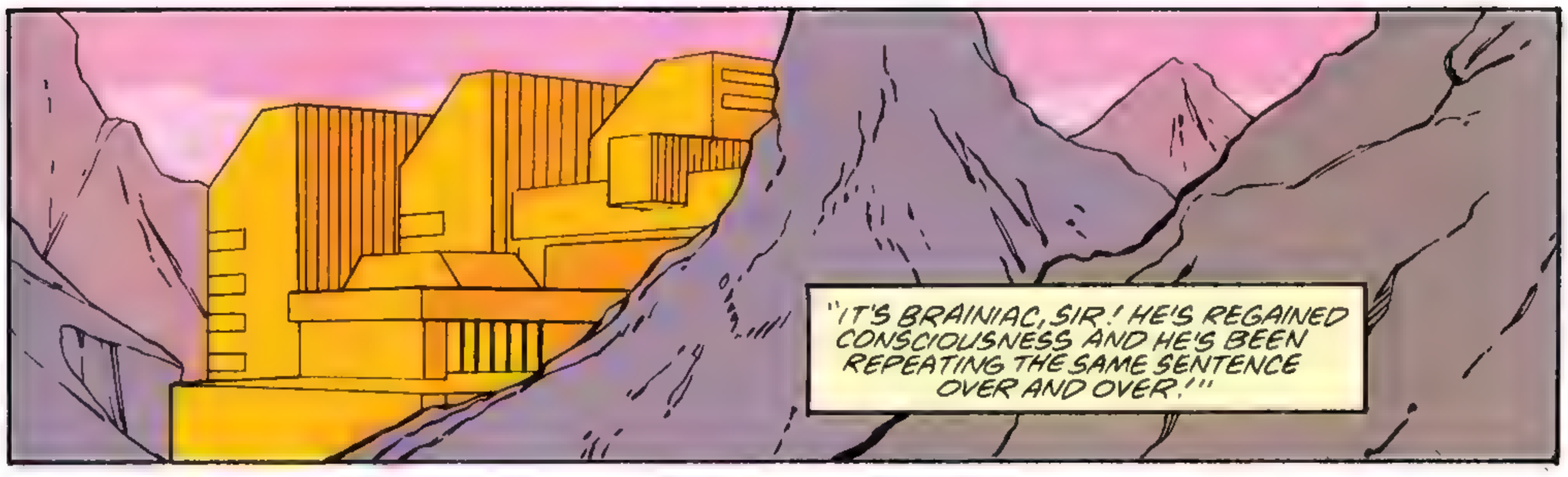
...WHERE *ARE* YOU?

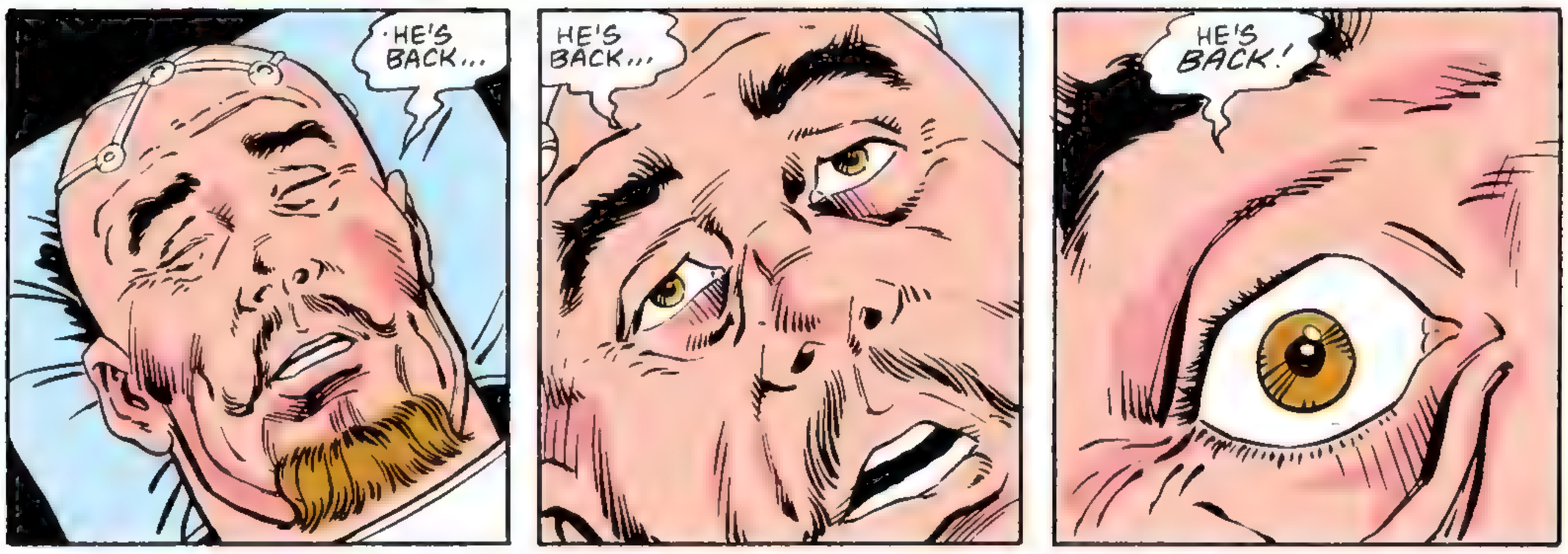
THIS *IS* DISTRESSING...

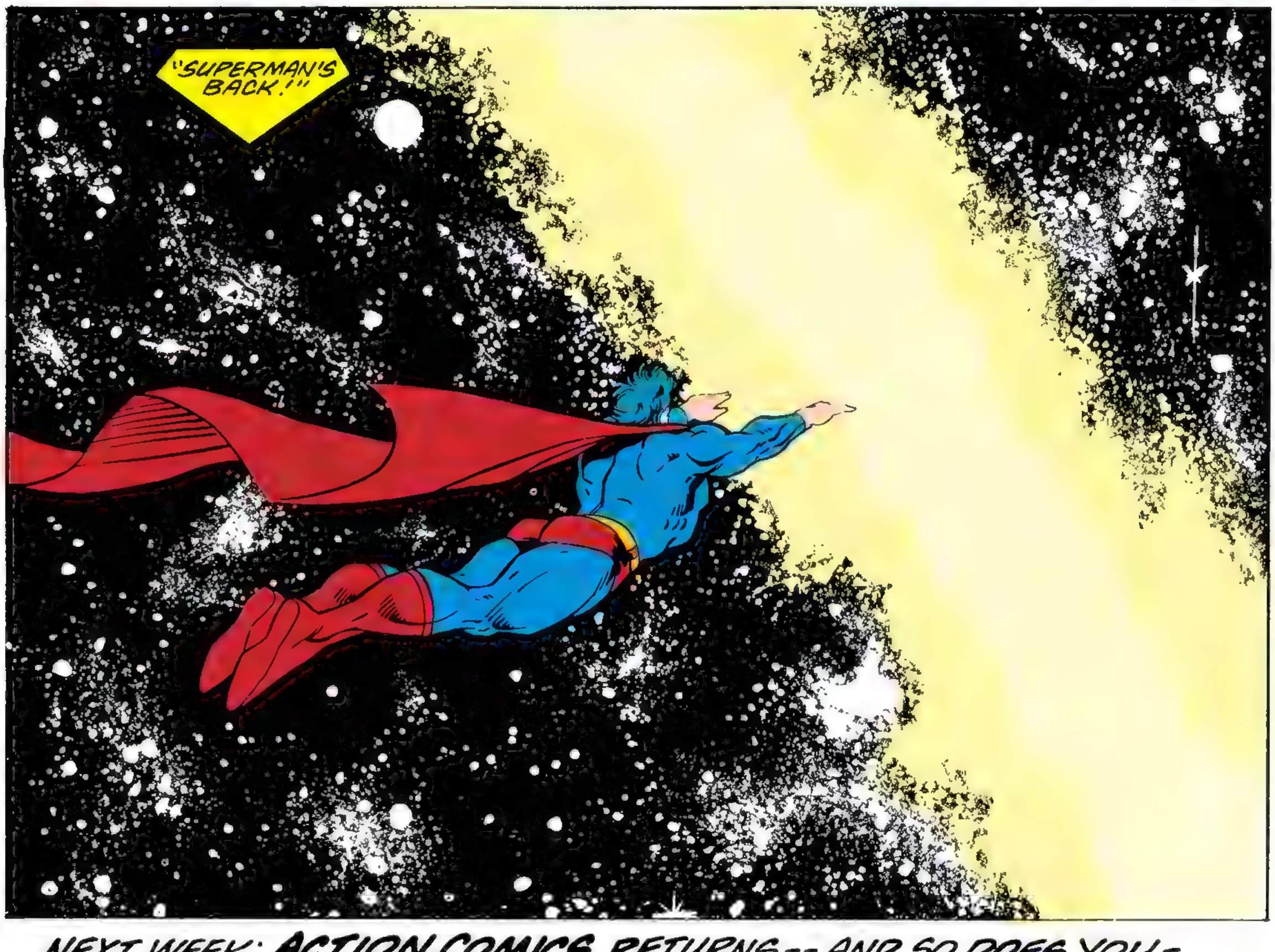
A TECHNOLOGICALLY SUPERIOR ROBOT IS RAMPAGING THROUGH THE WATERFRONT AREA--AND IT HAS *NOTHING* TO DO WITH LEXCORP.

I'D BETTER GET TEAM LUTHOR BACK INTO THEIR BATTLESUITS AND--

MR. L! SOMETHING IS *DEVELOPING* AT YOUR PSIONICS LAB IN THE ROCKIES!







NEXT WEEK: **ACTION COMICS** RETURNS--AND SO DOES YOU-KNOW-WHO! (THAT'S ACTION COMICS #643 BY GEORGE PEREZ & BRETT BREEDING!) THEN THE MAN OF STEEL IS "SKYHOOKED" AGAIN IN SUPERMAN #34! AND AFTER THAT, NEXT MONTH, IN ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN: MATRIX GOES "HOME!"

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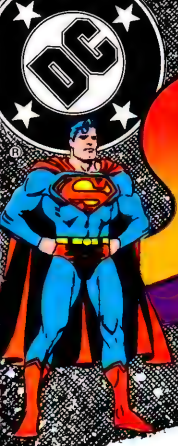

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File Photo by Jerry Ordway of the
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SUPERMAN

ANOTHER CITY'S BEEN *MURDERED!* AND THIS TIME THE MAN OF STEEL WILL *NOT* ACCEPT THE BLAME!

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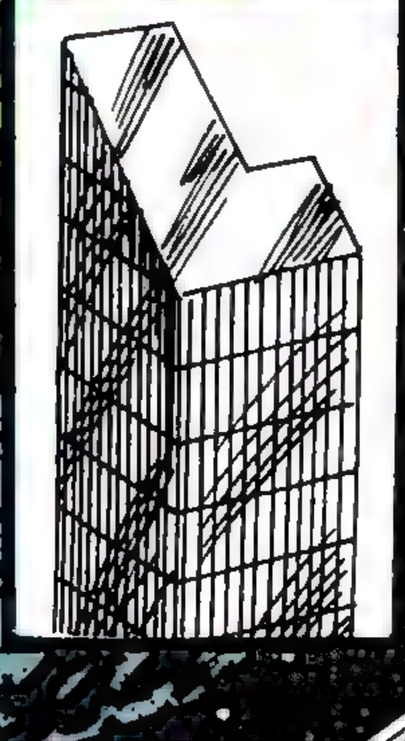

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THIS SCENE *PROBABLY* DOESN'T APPEAR IN THIS ISSUE... BUT WITH ME AROUND IT *COULD!*

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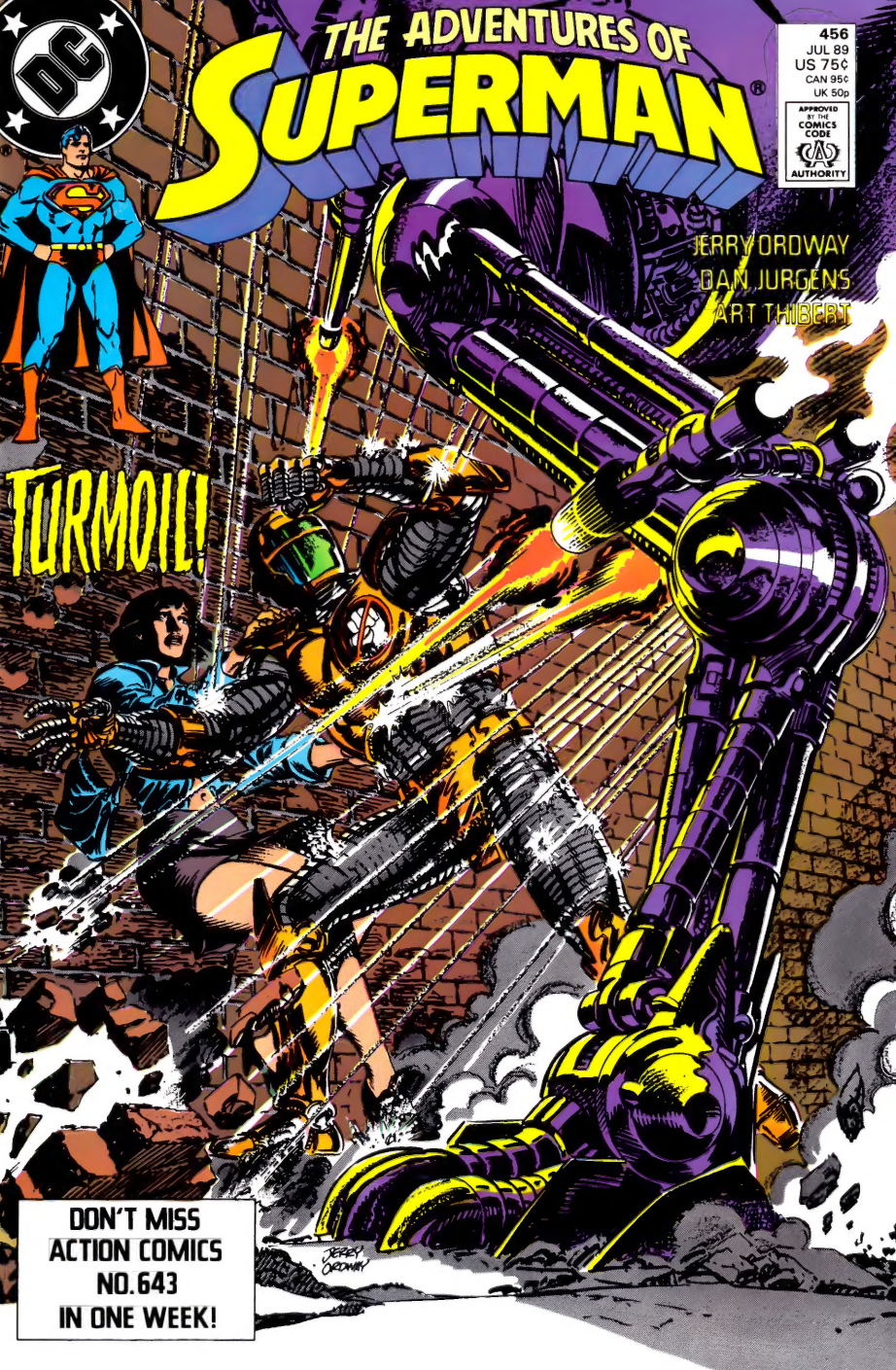
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